Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-242
Monday
18 December 1995

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Daily Report
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Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Chairs Cabinet Meeting in Nabulus

JN1512210395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Dec 95

[Report by Khalil Abu-'Arab in Nabulus]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] held its weekly meeting this evening chaired by President Yasir 'Arafat in the fourth liberated city, Nabulus, which was liberated from the Israeli occupation on 11 December.

The PNA Council of Ministers discussed the latest Palestinian developments, legislative elections, and the timetable of the redeployment.

Presidency Secretary General al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim spoke about the most important issues discussed by the council this evening.

[Begin 'Abd-al-Rahim recording] The Palestinian Council of Ministers discussed a number of topics on its agenda. The brother president congratulated our people in Nabulus and our Palestinian people everywhere on the liberation of Nabulus from Israeli occupation. The president said this would not have taken place without the sacrifices and unity of our people along the road of liberation of their homeland. He beseeched Almighty God that our next Council of Ministers meeting would be in another liberated city until we hold the meeting, God willing, in Jerusalem, the capital of our independent state. [end recording]

Speaking about the postponement of the Israeli withdrawal from Bethlehem, al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim said:

[Begin 'Abd-al-Rahim recording] The Israeli side informed us that due to the delay in the completion of the Bethlehem bypass road, the withdrawal would be postponed from 18 to 21 December. At the same time, we are going to continue with the preparations for Christmas. The Council of Ministers discussed the elections. The president asked all ministers who want to nominate themselves in the elections for the next legislative council to tender their resignation no later than tomorrow, and asked every minister who resigns to continue his duties until 23 December. In this context, the Council of Ministers accepted the resignation of the head and members of the elections and local government committee. Local Government Minister Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat was asked to continue his duties as acting head of the Central Elections Committee until a new committee is formed within the next few days. I believe that brother Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, was invited to head the elections committee. [end recording]

In his speech at the headquarters of the Palestinian National Security Forces in Nabulus this morning, President 'Arafat declared Nabulus a liberated city under the command of the PNA. President 'Arafat hailed Nabulus, where he arrived on board a helicopter, and lauded the struggle and sacrifices of the city's inhabitants. The president emphasized the need to liberate Palestinian prisoners, headed by Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, founder of the [Islamic Resistance Movement] Hamas. Nabulus is the third West Bank city in which the Palestinian Council of Ministers was convened after the liberation of Janin, Tulkarm, and Jericho. President 'Arafat and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will meet in Jericho tomorrow.

Opposition Condemns 'Arafat Statements in Nabulus

TA1512163995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Three days after the Israel army left Nabulus, the city this morning welcomed PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, who arrived with his entourage in two Egyptian helicopters from Gaza. An Israeli Air Force helicopter escorted the group.

'Arafat reviewed an honor guard of Palestinian security forces. He told the crowd of several thousands that eventually Jerusalem would be liberated and the Palestinian prisoners released, among them Shaykh Ahmad Yasin.

[Later in the program, a brief excerpt of 'Arafat's recorded remarks is provided, followed by an English translation: "Gaza we received; Janin, Tulkarm, Nabulus, Qalqilyah, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Hebron, and also holy Jerusalem."]

The opposition has condemned the 'Arafat statements and criticized the government's failure to respond. Chairman of the Likud secretariat, Yehoshu'a Matza, said that 'Arafat's pledge to liberate Jerusalem is in line with the commitments that Israel has given to the Palestinians. Matza pointed to the government's failure to close Orient House, which he says could lead to Jerusalem becoming the capital of Palestine.

Head of the National Religious Party, Zvulun Hammer, has called on the government to pay attention to what he termed 'Arafat's battle cry and to realize to whom Israel was returning territory and who will have control of security in these areas.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1200 GMT on 15 December adds: "Tzomet leader Refa'el Eytan said that 'Arafat's war threats are a direct continuation of the trampling over the Israeli army and state which

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took place two days ago in Nabulus. Eytan added that 'Arafat will continue to trample over us until he reaches Jerusalem, while the government and all the bleeding hearts remain silent. The Tzomet leader called for general elections to be held at once.

["Moledet leader Rehav'am Ze'evi called for halting the peace process and asking whose blood 'Arafat had in mind when he called for liberating Jerusalem and Palestine."]

'Arafat Meets With Authority Officials in Jericho

JN1612155595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1210 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Report by Shirin Abu-'Aqilah in Jericho]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat stressed that the Palestinian people paid a dear price to restore the homeland, and that all the attempts to delete the Palestinian people from the political map have failed.

President 'Arafat's statements came during a meeting with a number of National Authority officials upon arrival at the Presidential Office in Jericho today.

The president stressed that our people are stronger than all challenges. He added: Some people said Gaza and Jericho first and last, although I came to you today from Nabulus. Today also there will be Qalqilyah and then Bethlehem where we will celebrate Christmas under the Palestinian flag for the first time. This is to be followed by Ramallah and Hebron. God willing, we will pray in Jerusalem soon.

President 'Arafat urged the Palestinian people to achieve cohesion and solidarity, saying that elections will be held soon, and that these elections embody Palestinian democracy.

President 'Arafat will meet at approximately 1500 today with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

'Arafat, Warren Christopher Hold News Conference

JN1612195095 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat stressed the National Authority's commitment to the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement.

At a news conference after a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Jericho today, President 'Arafat said: There is only one option; namely, the option of peace on the land of peace, especially since we will celebrate Christmas in a few days. We hope that this celebration will not only be religious but will also support the peace of the brave.

President Yasir 'Arafat also thanked U.S. President Bill Clinton and the U.S. Administration for their support for the Palestinian people and the peace process. The president described his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher as successful and positive. He pointed out: I have found a response from Christopher regarding all the issues discussed at the meeting.

Answering a question on the importance of the topics discussed at the meeting, and his assessment of the meeting, he said:

[Begin 'Arafat recording] I would like to say that this was a successful, positive, and constructive meeting. We discussed all the issues with openness as usual. I should point here to the positive response I have received from Mr. Christopher. I should also praise the role of the United States, particularly President Clinton and his government, in supporting the peace process in the region, not only politically, but also practically and on the ground, and in helping the national Authority in many fields, including the economic field. Mr. Christopher said a while ago that the donor's [preceding word in English] conference will be held in Paris on 9 January. Here, I must reiterate our firm commitment to the peace process. There will be no going back on this peace, the peace of the brave. [end recording]

Christopher stressed the importance of commitment to the Taba agreement, and the need to fight extremism. He also stressed Washington's support for the coming Palestinian legislative elections. He expressed his country's readiness to extend all possible aid to the Palestinian economy. He said that the United States supports the conference of the donor states' ministers on aiding the Palestinian people. He noted that he will personally participate in this conference.

'Arafat 'Satisfied' With Syrian Track Progress

JN1712150195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Marwan Kanafani, adviser and spokesman to President Yasir 'Arafat, has said President 'Arafat is satisfied with the progress reported in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations.

Kanafani said President 'Arafat informed U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher of this position during their meeting yesterday. He also told him that the National Authority supports all the steps that will confirm the comprehensive nature of the peace solution since the comprehensive, just, and lasting solution is basically one of the demands defended by the PLO and the National Authority from the very beginning.

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'Arafat's spokesman said President 'Arafat also hopes progress will be made on the Lebanese-Israeli track so that a negotiated, peaceful, and acceptable comprehensive solution can be achieved in the region in accordance with the principles and ideas which all the concerned Arab parties agreed to in order to participate in the Madrid Conference.

'Arafat Returns to Gaza From Jericho

JN1712110695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1000 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat has said he hopes the redeployment operation in the other parts of the West Bank will continue in accordance with what was agreed.

On arrival at the presidency in Gaza from Jericho a short while ago, President 'Arafat said the withdrawal and redeployment operation in Qalqilyah and the National Authority's [NA] assumption of power over the city have taken place in accordance with the redeployment timetable. President 'Arafat said this operation is being carried out faithfully and meticulously.

President Yasir 'Arafat said that his contacts with the Israeli side continue.

On the delay in the withdrawal of the Israeli forces of occupation from Bethlehem and the NA's assumption of power there, President 'Arafat said: Three days. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Adviser Views Upcoming Gulf Tour

JN1712155095 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat, has announced that President 'Arafat will begin a tour of the Arabian Gulf states as of tomorrow, Monday, with a visit to the State of Qatar. Abu-Rudaynah described Palestinian-Qatari relations as good, adding that they have recently been bolstered by the opening of a Qatari representation office in the National Authority's [NA] territories.

Regarding dialogue between the NA and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] scheduled to start in Cairo tomorrow, Abu-Rudaynah said that President 'Arafat was expected to attend some rounds of talks with Hamas in Cairo. He also asserted that President Yasir 'Arafat was looking forward to promoting the recent understanding between the two sides into an agreement to enhance national unity, enable all parties to participate in the upcoming legislative elections, and build the homeland.

Regarding the Vatican's position on Jerusalem, President 'Arafat's adviser said that the Vatican does not recognize Israel's annexation of Jerusalem as capital of the State of Israel. He added: We have not heard about any official shift in the Vatican's position on Jerusalem.

'Arafat Leaves for Cairo, Gulf Tour

JN1812091795 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0800 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat left the homeland for Cairo early this morning where his excellency is expected to participate in some of the sessions of dialogue between the National Authority [NA] and the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement, scheduled to begin in Cairo today.

President 'Arafat will leave for Qatar via Egypt on the first leg of a Gulf tour for talks with Gulf officials on how to enhance bilateral relations and cooperation, and the latest developments in the peace process in light of the NA's assumption of security and civilian powers in several Palestinian cities and villages.

Hamas Delegation Arrives in Cairo for Dialogue

NC1612204495 Cairo MENA in English 2026 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 16 (MENA) — A four-man delegation of the Palestinian Resistance Movement (Hamas) arrived here from Khartoum tonight.

Two delegations from Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority will hold talks here on Monday [18 December] to reach an agreement ahead of the Palestinian legislative elections, slated for January 20.

Israeli Forces Withdraw From Qalqilyah

JN1612205295 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli occupation forces withdrew from the city of Qalqilyah this evening, ending 28 years of occupation. Na'im Suwaylim reports from Qalqilyah:

[Begin Suwaylim recording] The Palestinian national security forces and police began to enter the liberated city of Qalqilyah a short while ago after the withdrawal of the last Israeli soldier from the city after 28 years of occupation.

The masses of the city of Qalqilyah took to the streets and received the Palestinian national security forces and

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police with chants, songs, and national slogans that express their joy over this historic event. The masses also raised Palestinian flags and pictures of President Yasir 'Arafat and martyr Abu-'Ali Iyad.

The Palestinian national security forces and police spread all over the city, organized traffic, and maintained law and order. A short while ago, Major General Amin al-Hindi, director of the General Intelligence in Palestine, arrived at the former headquarters of the occupation's military administration. Al-Hindi told our radio that he is happy about the liberation of the city of Qalqilyah from the Israeli occupation. On the security measures that are to be taken, Maj. Gen. al-Hindi said any violator of laws and regulations will be penalized. Colonel Musa Jadallah, director of the police in the Qalqilyah governorate, delivered a short speech, during which he conveyed greetings from President Yasir 'Arafat and his congratulations on the liberation of the city from occupation. Jadallah said the president will visit Qalqilyah shortly. Jadallah added that offices will open tomorrow for business.

The masses of the city continue their celebrations everywhere. Many people danced and sang in joy. [und min recording of folk songs and chants]

Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the Presidency, will represent President Yasir 'Arafat at 0800 tomorrow to raise the Palestinian flag over the building that housed the occupation's military administration. Afterward, a popular celebration will be held at Martyr Abu-'Ali Iyad Square downtown. This is Na'im Suwaylim reporting from the city of Qalqilyah. [end recording]

Colonel Mahmud 'Awadallah, the military official of the Tulkarm area, said the National Authority decided to collect illegal weapons possessed by citizens in the region. Col. 'Awadallah urged people who have personal weapons to hand them over to the police and security forces or to apply for a license to carry these weapons through the offices of the Tulkarm police department.

In assessing the deployment of the national security forces in Tulkarm, 'Awadallah said citizens have started to feel secure and that the security forces are providing the necessary protection for them.

Ministry Denounces Israeli Ban of Jordan Delegation

JN1612160195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Information Ministry denounced the decision by the Israeli authorities to ban the Jordanian popular delegation from entering Palestinian territories to participate in the Nabulus celebrations. The celebrations were attended by President Yasir 'Arafat yesterday.

In a statement issued today, the ministry said the Israeli measure against 500 Jordanian personalities who represent various sectors of the Jordanian people and their political, unionist, and parliamentary forces, was a tyrannical measure against the Palestinian National Authority and the fraternal Jordanian people.

The statement said the Israeli banning of entry of the Jordanian delegation conflicts with the peace agreements concluded between the Jordanian Government and Israel on the one hand, and between the PLO and the Israeli Government on the other.

The ministry described the Israeli measure as one of the Israeli attempts to isolate the Palestinian national entity from its Arab depth and to prevent its contacts with the Jordanian people as well as to prevent any Jordanian popular or official assistance to the Palestinian people and their National Authority.

The Information Ministry emphasized that the National Authority has the right to invite and receive any Arab personalities and delegations it wants on its land without any disturbances. It also emphasized the deep and excellent fraternal relations between the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples in particular, and the Palestinian and all Arab peoples in general.

Ashrawi Discusses Future of Peace Process

MS1812103095 London INDEPENDENT in English 18 Dec 95 p 12

[Interview with Hanan Ashrawi, former PLO envoy to Washington, by Robert Fisk in Ramallah; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hanan Ashrawi is a journalist's dream. She speaks in complete sentences and, at times, you wait for her to add the words "full stop" at the end. The academic arguments and demands for human rights of the PLO s former envoy to Washington match her grammar. They appear to be perfect, unarguable. Why not you ask yourself, let Hanan Ashrawi write the article?

Why, she can even convince a sceptic that the broken-backed "peace process" might yet contain some life, semi-comatose for the present perhaps but capable of future development. And that — given the maintenance of Jewish settlements in occupied land, the refusal of the Israelis to contemplate a Palestinian as well as an Israeli capital in Jerusalem, the virtual exclusion of the

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entire Palestinian diaspora of up to 3 million souls — is quite an achievement.

The most famous English literature teacher in the world sits in her Ramallah home refusing to comment on the fact everyone knows: that she is to be a candidate for Jerusalem in the 20 January elections for the 83-seat Palestinian legislature.

Despite the rumours of nepotism, the growing evidence of tribal loyalties that will divide rather than unite Palestinians, she believes in these elections. "They come within the framework of an agreement that is inherently unfair," she says. "I'm not saying the legislature is going to be pure and clean and perfect. But elections are one of the instruments of change here and part of self-empowerment. We should use them to the hilt. They can create legislators who can supervise the permanent status negotiations" on Jerusalem, settlements and refugees.

Already Palestinian seats are being divided up on sectarian lines. "But elections are very healthy," Mrs Ashrawi insists. "And you must not forget two important factors: the role of women and the role of the young — those who have been activists (sic) are also going to make a difference. They will be independent-minded. And I think Hamas [the largest Islamist group, which is boycotting the elections] should run. We should have inclusive democracy, comprehensive democracy. I have told Hamas: 'You are depriving your supporters of the right to representation."

And settlements? What of those tens of thousands of Jewish homes spread across the land which we now have to think of as "Palestine," along with their 120,000 Israeli inhabitants? "I don't think the settlers are monolithic. I think there are a considerable number of 'economic' settlers who, with compensation and new housing in Israel, would leave. The ideologues are the dangerous ones, who carry a gun in one hand and a Bible in the other; but even some of these would be prepared to live in a Palestinian state. But the greatest danger are the hard-line ideologues who have divine dispensation to stay on our land — this is not just a Palestinian problem but an Israeli problem. These settlers are armed and they have the power of life and death over us — and if they go back to their own society (inside Israel), they will continue to act like that."

Hanan Ashrawi knew Yitzhaq Rabin as she knows Shimon Peres and she sees his assassination as a product of the Israeli government's miscalculations. "It was political expedience — the Israelis thought they could use the settlers as a bargaining chip in the negotiations with us. We kept predicting that the settlers would become very dangerous, that they would kill Israeli soldiers [who tried to move them]. We didn't think they would go to the top. Now that kind of divine settler power is truly lethal."

Mrs Ashrawi muses for a long time on what she regards as the double standards of the Middle East. 'No-one who killed an Arab was ever called a 'terrorist' — it was all right to kill an Arab,' she says. "But now the one-sided use of the word 'terrorist' has backfired, because the Israelis never believed that their moral 'high ground' would allow a Jew to kill a Jew. There had been all this escalation of, rhetoric and verbal abuse [against Rabin] and there had been a very strange marriage between ultra-Orthodox Jews and ultra-nationalist Jews."

Which is why, Mrs Ashrawi says, the settlers are not just a political issue. "Israel cannot have it both ways — to argue about both ideology and political pragmatism. If they want to talk about ideology, they can talk to Hamas. If they genuinely want to talk peace, they have to discuss with us all things based on international law — and that means settlements and Jerusalem." She says there is an inherent bias against the Palestinians. "But you don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. Our self-interest is legitimate. We've dealt with ideals for so many years. Our dignity lies in controlling the crossing points and securing the sovereignty of our land. We have the strength of argument."

True or not, few Palestinians are in any doubts about the importance of Israeli-Syrian negotiations, and it is here that Mrs Ashrawi sounds a false note. "We encourage the Syrians and if the Syrians and Israelis can make a fair peace, it will help us," she says. But is that really true at the moment? For if Syria signed up for peace before the final Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, it would leave the Palestinians as the only party in the Middle East conflict without a peace treaty and without international guarantees to protect them. The Palestinians would be out in the cold, with no pressure on the Israelis to move beyond the "interim" phase of PLO "cantons" and a powerless legislature.

There must be many a Palestinian democrat who secretly hopes that Syria's President Assad — however cynically he may be viewed by the PLO — holds out for longer. Mrs Ashrawi will not comment. So you put "full stop" in your notebook.

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, U.S. Provide Aid to Refugees

JN1512163495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait has for the first time announced that it allocated $1 million as a contribution toward supporting the Palestinian people.

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For its part, Saudi Arabia has promised to give $20 million to the Palestinian refugees. The United States also promised to finance projects worth $3 million and create new job opportunities for the refugees.

This came at the conclusion of a meeting on refugees, as part of the peace process, held in the Swiss capital and attended by representatives from 50 states and international organizations.

'Arafat Files Nomination for Presidential Election

JN1712203195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Central Election Committee today received the official application of nomination submitted by President Yasir 'Arafat to run in the presidential elections.

In statements to our radio today, Sa'ib 'Urayqat, local government minister and chairman of the Central Election Committee, said President 'Arafat presented his application, together with a $3,000 cheque, an approval by the Palestinian Interior Ministry, and a certificate issued by the Fatah Movement.

Thus, President 'Arafat is the first official candidate for the presidential elections, scheduled to take place on 20 January.

Decree Specifies Seats for Various Constituencies

JN1512200595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat this evening issued a presidential decree concerning the distribution of legislative council's seats in the various constituencies.

According to this decree, Jerusalem Constituency will have six seats, Gaza City Constituency 10 seats, Jericho Constituency one seat, Rafah Constituency five seats, Nabulus Constituency eight seats, Salfit Constituency one seat, Tulkarm Constituency four seats, Bethlehem Constituency four seats, Northern Gaza Constituency seven seats, Hebron Constituency nine seats, Tubas Constituency one seat, Ramallah Constituency seven seats, Janin Constituency six seats, Dayr al-Balah Constituency five seats, Qalqilyah Constituency two seats, and Khan Yunus seven seats.

The presidential decree allocates seats for the Christian brothers as follows: Gaza one seat, Ramallah one seat, Bethlehem two seats, and Jerusalem two seats. Also one seat is allocated for our people who belong to the Samaritan sect in the Nabulus Constituency.

Opposition Groups Urge Boycott of Elections

NC1612083095 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic GMT 0630 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ramadan 'Abdallah, secretary general of the Islamic Jihad Organization in Palestine, has said participation in elections in the self-rule areas is considered criminal and banned. He stressed the need to boycott the elections.

Abu-'Ali Mustafa, a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] figure stressed the PFLP's stance on the need to boycott the elections. The statements were made during a political rally held by the PFLP and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] in the al-Yarmuk camp near Damascus.

DFLP Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah warned of the dangers of the dialogue between the Islamic Resistance movement, Hamas, and the Palestinian Authority [PA] scheduled in Cairo and of the dangers of the ploy of PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat to certain opposition groups. He stressed the need to boycott the elections.

Factions Meet in Gaza, Discuss Elections

JN1712203795 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Representatives of several Palestinian factions met at the headquarters of the Arab Liberation Front-Provisional Command in the city of Gaza this evening to discuss the upcoming Palestinian legislative elections. The conferees also studied the best ways to entrench the national trend by holding a national and democratic election.

'Abd-al-'Aziz Qudayh, representative of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, said after the meeting that the conferees agreed to call a meeting of the secretaries general of the factions, which participated in today's meeting, to coordinate efforts and secure broad participation in the upcoming Palestinian elections.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Palestinian Democratic Union Party, the Palestinian People's Party, the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, the Arab Liberation Front-Provisional Command, the Palestinian Liberation Front, the Islamic Jihad Organization-al-Aqsa Battalions, and the National Movement for Change.

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Arab-Israeli Talks

Christopher: Syria-Israel Talks To Resume 27 Dec

JN1612185895 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1840 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Warren Christopher, U.S. secretary of state, this evening announced that talks on the Syrian-Israeli track will resume near Washington on 27 December.

In a statement broadcast by Israeli radio, Christopher said: In the name of President Hafiz al-Asad, President Bill Clinton, and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, I announce the resumption of the Syrian-Israeli negotiations on all issues related to peace between Syria and Israel.

Christopher said his meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus and his talks in Israel are aimed at reactivating the peace negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track. He added that the two sides are concerned about pushing forward the negotiations, stressing that U.S. policy is to help the two sides make progress in the peace process.

Regarding U.S.-Jordanian relations, Christopher emphasized the warmth which characterizes peace between Jordan and Israel, stressing Washington's understanding of Jordan's military needs, and its determination to supply the Jordanian Army with modern arms.

To be Held at 'Working Level' in U.S.

TA1612123595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0805 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz]

[FBIS Translated Text] There is news on the Syrian front. Although the official announcement will be made this evening, we can report that the Israeli-Syrian talks are to be resumed. This is apparently what Prime Minister Shim'on Peres heard last night from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who dined at his table. That was the first course of the festive dinner.

According to information I have, the official announcement on the resumption of the talks, which have been frozen for a long time, will be made at a news conference planned for this evening. The negotiations will probably take place in Washington and, if that is the case, I assume these talks, like the previous ones, will be headed by Ambassador Rabinovich.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1200 GMT on 16 December adds: "The Israeli-Syria negotiations will be resumed after Christmas. They will be at what is called a working level and will probably take place in Washington or its environs. In view of the anticipated resumption of the talks, Secretary Christopher will not return to Damascus during his current shuttle." The report adds that "Israel will be represented by Amb. Itamar Rabinovich and Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir, the Syrians by Amb. Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, and the Americans by mediator Dennis Ross and his aide."]

Parties Can Reject U.S. Plans

TA1712094895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States is ready to propose alternatives and ideas in the negotiations between Israel and Syria; however, Washington will not impose its views and the parties will be able to decide whether or not to accept the U.S. proposals. This was revealed at this morning's meeting between Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that at the meeting, the two men discussed ways to guarantee that the talks would not blow up as soon as substantive or contentious issues appear on the agenda.

After the meeting, Christopher went to visit Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's grave. Later today, the secretary of state will fly to Egypt and then return to Washington.

Syria Reportedly Agrees to Ministers' Meeting

TA1712190395 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Video report by Arab affairs correspondent Aharon Barne'a]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There has been yet another sign of thawing in Syria. Damascus has lifted its opposition in principle to a meeting between Israeli and Syrian foreign ministers, our Arab affairs correspondent Aharon Barne'a has learned from senior Arab diplomatic sources close to the Syrian leadership. Syria today welcomed the resumption of talks with Israel, but reiterated that it has no intention of giving up the demand for a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights and south Lebanon.

[Begin Barne'a recording] [passage omitted] We learned today from high-level Arab sources close to the Syrian leadership that President al-Asad has lifted his opposition in principle to a meeting between Israeli and Syrian foreign ministers. The first meeting between Ehud Baraq and Faruq al-Shar' might take place early next week during Baraq's visit to Cairo, but it is also possible that

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the meeting might be postponed until the completion of the first round of talks, which start in Washington on 27 December. Whatever the case, the person who makes peace with Syria, official sources in Damascus said today, will have a much more prominent role in history than those who conducted wars against it, and that man will probably be Shim'on Peres. [end recording]

Jerusalem said in response that it has so far not received any announcement about a Syrian willingness to hold a foreign ministers meeting.

'Secret' Water Talks Said Near Agreement

TA1612152895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Norwegian newspaper DAGBLADET writes today that Israeli, Jordanian, and PLO delegations have been conducting secret talks on water issues for a year and a half and that an agreement in principle about the division of water resources will be signed in about two weeks. Our correspondent Eliyahu Zehavi reports that the talks in Oslo were led by Professor (Martin Dalen), a Norwegian water expert.

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Algeria

UN To Send Envoy To Resolve Deadlock

LD1612095895 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali will send his special envoy to the Arab Maghreb region at the beginning of next year in an attempt to seek an acceptable settlement for and clear the deadlock in the Saharan identification process. [Passage omitted]

Ghali, who announced the decision before the UN Security Council yesterday's night, affirmed that the disputes between Morocco and the Polisario Front were "very deep." [Passage omitted]

President Zeroual Speaks on Justice Issues

LD1712182995 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1227 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Speech by President Liamine Zeroual on opening of the judicial year; place and date not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Prayers and peace be upon the most honorable missionary. [passage omitted]

Ladies and gentlemen; my presence here is first and foremost yet another sign of the great appreciation of the nation for our judiciary body which assumes a heavy and noble task. [passage omitted]

Algerian justice has paid the cost of sacrifice for the sake of maintaining an Algeria that rejects submission to chaos, and is determined to make all efforts to bring about correction at national level. [passage omitted]

My presence here is also an occasion to remind you of what the Algerian people expect from their justice, and to offer you my directives on the contribution you should make in order to entrench a new national order, the order recently decided on by Algeria.

Ladies and gentlemen; last year at a presentation here I focused on some directives aimed at strengthening Algerian justice and giving substance to the inevitability of the rule of law in all situations and in all circumstances. Today, I should like to express my satisfaction at the stages traversed toward this end, including the legal amendments introduced by the transitional national council into important legal texts. Thanks to these amendments, savage acts of terrorism are now judged in accordance with their nature and also as criminal acts committed against all the people. They are crimes unanimously condemned by the nation, and the state will fight them relentlessly. Algerian justice should punish them with all the severity of the law. Such severity in fighting terrorism-related crimes is both legitimate and necessary, but the Algerian nation with its spiritual and moral values, which is aware of its responsibility toward its misguided sons, has however placed the force and guarantees of law at the service of its sincere initiatives in the form of the clemency measures meant for its sons that had gone astray and who return to the right path.

A few days ago I urged all the nation to use all its energy in promoting clemency, and today, once again I urge justice to be committed to such a course of action, to offer guarantees to the misled who return to the right path, and to show its sense of justice and equity in favor of national reconciliation and in the service of national unity. At the same time, the independent Algerian justice should use the severity of the law against the criminals, the traitors, and the mercenaries who are fighting the nation, and finally Algerian judges should see to it that crime is being eradicated in all circumstances, in a legal framework and within the respect of the rule of law.

There is another source of satisfaction: Algeria has recently rehabilitated the auditing council and its natural role consisting of the correct and sound use of public funds irrespective, of the place where such funds are used. The auditing council which has recovered its legal competence and authority, must from now on assume its task firmly, diligently, and speedily, with the sole aim of protecting the people's money and imposing the rule of law. The rehabilitation of the auditing council has not been dictated by any political calculations or tendentious objectives. Therefore, it is the duty of the auditing council to assume in all sovereignty the responsibilities conferred on it by the Algerian people in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.

Ladies and gentlemen; Algerian justice has made progress but more remains to be done and considerable efforts should be exerted to this end. [passage omitted]

The Algerian people recently affirmed loyalty to its own authentic values and principles, and once again clearly showed its preparedness every time it is called upon by national duty. The Algerian people is ready for all sacrifices so long as they are distributed equitably between all, and so long as they are made in the interest of Algeria. However, this people categorically rejects disregard to justice as much as it rejects to see encroachment on its individual and national rights. [passage omitted]

Ladies and gentlemen; the new national order for which the Algerian people recently voted means none other than the completion of all the objectives laid down by

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the glorious November revolution, the objectives that were the reason for the great sacrifices made by our loyal martyrs, and for which our people are still paying a high price with sacrifice and diligence. The new national order requires the realization of tasks in all domains.

The realization of these tasks is a long-term work, however we should quickly lay down solid foundations for this end, and we should give substance to the first results. We will try to undertake such work together, relying first on God and then on our own resources where material wealth is not as important as the mobilization of our people. For such popular mobilization to remain continuous and permanent the state should be a tangible example to be followed.

The consolidation of the state is necessary for any national development action, and for any entrenching of multiparty democracy. [passage omitted]

The state should be cleansed of all the social scourges that weaken it, and which are, as you know, bureaucracy, tribalism, and nepotism. We must also protect national wealth against bribes and waste. In this respect, I have already told citizens that the state has to strengthen itself by means of new practices and rules and structures that guarantee that these problems are taken care of.

I am saying that this issue is connected, in addition to the modernized auditing council, with a law on a public declaration of wealth before and after exercising electoral tasks, or senior responsibilities in the state's institutions. The matter is also connected with the creation of protective control from bribery. In the end, the matter is connected with the structure of the mediation which listens to the demands of the citizens who consider themselves to be have been unjustly deprived of their rights, and which will attempts to examine them and restore the rights to the people.

On this occasion which gathers us today, I invite the concerned bodies in the state to embark on carrying out the necessary actions in order to implement all these measures before the end of the first half of 1996.

I also expect the justice apparatus to shoulder its protective responsibility against all crimes and breaches through the judicial police, which it oversees. [passage omitted]

Ladies and gentlemen, the new national regime also includes the need to return to true and everlasting development, which is a source of satisfying the citizen's legitimate needs, and a necessary backing for national independence. The difficulties under which the development would be launched are well known to everyone. These difficulties require the rejection of demagogy. [passage omitted]

These difficulties necessitate generous efforts and the sharing of sacrifices between everybody. Algeria will remain faithful to its principles in the field of social justice and national solidarity. The state will evenly distribute the necessary austerity. It is also necessary to respect the market economy rules with regard to taxes and the rights of workers as well as the protection of consumers.

Justice should make sure that these rules and principles are respected by referring to law only, which applies to everybody. In this context I insist, once again today, that it is urgent for the judiciary authorities to improve the competence of their officials and to recruit the necessary competences required by our new economic environment. It is necessary for the judiciary authority and for the training sector to make great efforts to reach this aim. The government is called on to provide an important participation by reviewing laws and the background required by these qualitative changes.

I cannot conclude these reminders and directives without insisting once again on the need for the participation of the Algerian judiciary authorities in order to promote liberties in our country.

Algeria has been able, with God Almighty's will, and in spite of all the crisis, to preserve the advantages of liberties together with political pluralism and freedom of speech. These choices cannot be reversed and their continuous development requires the respect of the laws on which they are based, by all. On this basis, the judiciary authority provides the best guarantees for preserving democratic liberties, by making sure that the law is respected by everybody under all circumstances.

Ladies and gentlemen, at a time when a number of voluntary perceptions are urgently developing here and there about our national preoccupations, I would like to take this official and happy opportunity to draw the attention to the option of the Algerian people expressed a few weeks ago on the urgent priorities which burden their daily life, priorities upon which the national destiny depends in all fields.

Today, more than at any other time, the will of the Algerian people is the one and only reference which leads our national action. Algeria is forging ahead toward the realization of its objectives according to the priorities laid down by the nation which expressed its opinion in full freedom, without authorization from anyone, and through a general and free vote.

An honest patriotic contribution is expected from everyone to serve the Algerian people alone. The state for its part will work toward renewing all its commitments with all seriousness and resolve.

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The Algerian judiciary — and it gives me pleasure today to express my opinion before its family and to renew to it my greetings and sincere wishes — admittedly have a number of objectives which should be achieved and have a major contribution that should be offered to the nation to renew its course within the national correction action.

In conclusion, I officially declare the opening of the judicial year. Thank you and peace and God's compassion and blessing be upon you. [Applause]

FIS Statement on Bombing, Political Violence

MM1512150195 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Dec 95 p 6

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Islamic Salvation Front Condemns Algiers Blast, Says 'Crimes' Cannot Solve Political Problems"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London — The Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] Executive Committee (led by Shaykh Rabah Kebir) yesterday condemned the car bomb in the Algerian capital's Ain Naadja district. It said that the country's "political problems" cannot be solved by committing "crimes against humanity." It urged President Liamine Zeroual to provide "a comprehensive political solution to accelerate national reconciliation."

The announcement of this position, clearly intended to show that the FIS wants to reaffirm its intention to cooperate with the government to resolve the crisis and distance itself from bombings and crimes in Algeria, coincided with another position stated in a bulletin very close to the FIS abroad, containing a virulent criticism of the Armed Islamic Group [GIA].

The [FIS] Executive Committee's position came in a statement numbered 17, of which AL-HAYAH received a copy. It said: "Faced with the ugliness of the criminal act committed on Tuesday by exploding a car bomb outside a cafe in Algiers' southern district, resulting in a large number of victims, dead and wounded, among our people, we strongly condemn this criminal act and denounce it, as we denounce its perpetrators regardless of their affiliations." It went on: "In view of the great dangers threatening the Muslim Algerian people, aimed at its members and possessions from numerous quarters, the effort to find a comprehensive and just political solution must be the most urgent objective for both the opposition and the authorities, so that security and peace may prevail among civilians, all masks are removed, and the criminals thirsty for the Algerian people's blood as well as those who enjoy working in secret and fishing in murky waters, are exposed."

It added: "The FIS reaffirms that criminal violence against Algerians or foreigners must be denounced and condemned by all those involved in politics, because it is not possible to justify solving political problems, whatever their nature, by crimes against humanity." It pointed out that the annulment of the 1991 elections was the reason that "a significant section of the Algerian people resorted to armed jihad."

It stressed that a solution to the crisis "is through an urgent comprehensive political solution, with everyone, opposition and authorities, clearly and frankly vowing to renounce violence as a means for political action in order either to remain in or come to power. This is what the FIS vowed to do, and it asked the parties to do the same, through the Muslim shaykhs' document presented to the authorities' representatives last June, and previously through the FIS' signing of the National Covenant, to which we are still committed and which we still believe represents a plan for a comprehensive and just political solution."

It went on: "In keeping with the logic of the open letter we sent to President Zeroual, we ask him to keep the promises he made to the Algerian people during the election campaign, by daring to embark on a comprehensive political solution and accelerate national reconciliation by releasing political detainees, and especially the FIS leaders, by lifting the injustices that have befallen the Algerian people during the past four years, and also by a serious and thorough dialogue with the opposition enabling everyone to contribute to the solution by restoring peace and security, and hence to submit to the choice of the free and sovereign people in an atmosphere of security and respect."

It said that "the momentum created by the Algerian people expressing their commitment to the return of peace among civilians through the recent presidential elections, and the ensuing positive decision with regard to closing the infamous detention centers (Naadja) and releasing the detainees, has provided more than ever before the right climate for a comprehensive political solution. Every day that goes by without a courageous initiative in this direction is a great loss for the Algerian people and for all the government and opposition political circles."

In another position stressing the contrast between the FIS and the GIA's actions, the AL-RIBAT bulletin yesterday published a lengthy article on the reasons why the Executive Committee refrained from blessing the union achieved in the spring of last year between the FIS, the Islamic State Movement [harakat al-dawlah al- islamiyah], and the GIA (under the GIA's banner). Under the title "Reasons for Refusal," the article said:

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"When the union was announced in May 1994, and many raced to bless it and march under its banner, we were among those who refused to join it and follow its path. We did not refuse because of sensitivities or to defend interests, as rumored by some to calumniate the honesty of the FIS Executive Committee abroad. That is why our disagreement with Shaykh Mohamed Said (may God have mercy on him) about the issue of the union and the diluting of the FIS within the GIA framework was not out of ingratitude to the shaykh for his preaching and Islamic work, and neither was it to deny brother Abderrazak Radjam's courage in the face of adversity. Our position was built on sound foundations, based on the Shari'ah, and is as follows:

"We are aware that the tendency leading the GIA is a repudiationist tendency led by the international jihad, proponent of the view of 'benefiting from the Afghan jihad.' Because this tendency hid behind the slogan of rejecting the elections and because the authorities canceled the electoral track in 1992, it seized the opportunity to spread its ideas and tendency among the front-line youth eager for jihad.

"The early appearance of the GIA's deviations and its violations of the rights of many innocent people, especially women, and the directing of the struggle against a section of the Algerian people by burning gas stations, schools, and much else.

"Its main objective through its bulletin AL-ANSAR is the repudiation of Islamic action leaders in Algeria and abroad. No scholar or preacher enjoyed credibility unless he followed their path and tendency, even if it led to the elimination of their opponents and adversaries in the arena. That is how Shaykh Mohamed Bouslimani and brother Nasser Tetraoui and Shaykh Abdelbaki Sahraoui were eliminated. In the end, they even resorted to assassinating those who joined their ranks and showed opposition on any specific issue like Shaykhs Mohamed Said and Abderrazak Radjam."

The article adds: "For these and other reasons, we rejected the union because it did not offer the conditions of legitimacy. The assassination of preachers is a loss for the Islamic plan which cannot be replaced. We blame the cadres close to Shaykh Mohamed Said, and especially Anouar Haddam, for failing to adopt a clear stance toward the GIA and its transgressions violating the Shari'ah and for their persistence in keeping silent about them and justifying their crimes and making no mention of them and their responsibility in the assassination of leading Islamic preachers in Algeria."

It added: "We warn the brothers working with the FIS that our opposition to the direction of the GIA does not at all mean opposition to the jihad and the mujahidin or their disavowal, but we believe that the AIS is the most sincere framework representing the legitimate jihad. It has not committed any crime against innocent defenseless citizens and has formed itself silently and sincerely."

GIA Leaders Said, Radjam Killed in Medea

LD1612175995 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Now we talk about terrorism: Mohamed Said and Abderrazak Radjam, two terrorists who were being sought, are dead; they were killed by other terrorists. This revelation was made by a repentant criminal during his appearance on television yesterday. The repentant criminal also said that he has information regarding the carrying out of sentences on leaders of criminal groups, in particular Lounis Belkacem, also known as Mohamed Said, and Abderrazak Radjam. The operation took place in the Medea region over a month ago, he stated.

Algerian 'Afghans' Accused

MM1812090695 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Dec 95 p 6

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "New Details About Killing of Two GIA Leaders; Group of Algerian 'Afghans' Killed Shaykhs Said and Radjam"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London — Algerian Islamic sources confirmed to AL-HAYAH yesterday that a group of "Algerian Afghans" are responsible for killing Shaykhs Mohamed Said and Abderrazak Radjam and some of their supporters in the mountains of the Medea area at the beginning of November.

The sources pointed out that Shaykh Mohamed Said differed some months ago with the Armed Islamic Group [GIA] leadership, which he joined in the spring of 1994. The sources said that the cause of the disagreement was his objection to many of the actions attributed to the GIA which numerous ulema believe conflict with the Shari'ah. The sources added that "violent debate" continued for a few months between Shaykh Said, a former leading figures in the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] and leader of the "Algerianization" tendency, and other GIA leaders. And that a "repudiationist group" of Algerian Afghans decided to settled the matter by sanctioning the killing of Said, Radjam, and a large number of their supporters. The sources said that this group is one of numerous groups belonging to the GIA which arrived in Algeria not so long ago, and that it enjoys the support of hard-line elements inside the GIA, especially in the mountains of the central region.

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The sources also said that the killing was carried out in the Medea area at the beginning of last month, and that a large number of Said's guards were killed with him, while other supporters managed to escape.

It has been noted that FIS circles abroad which belong to Shaykh Said's tendency have so far not accused the GIA of his murder. The bulletin AL-QADIYAH, published in Europe by the "Platform of FIS Elections—Algeria," said that the circumstances of the killing of Said and Radjam "are not clear yet," and that "an investigation has been launched to clarify the circumstances of their murder. Some parties point to the responsibility of some GIA leaders, but we are awaiting the results of the investigation." This position is identical to that of Anouar Haddam, head of the FIS Parliamentary Mission, who confirmed the murder of Said and Radjam, but he did not accuse any quarter of committing the crime.

Islamic sources tell AL-HAYAH that consultations are being conducted inside Shaykh Said's tendency that joined the GIA to settle their position on the crime. Among the options proposed is to withdraw from it after finding a quarter to protect those withdrawing for fear that the GIA might kill them.

The FIS' bulletins yesterday continued their campaign against the GIA. The bulletin AL-SABIL, issued by FIS supporters in London, published a long report about the FIS' relationship with the GIA since Said and Radjam joined the latter in May 1994. It said that the FIS pointed out that Radjam's and Said's signing of the "unification declaration" with the GIA represented the two persons, not the FIS as a whole. It added that the GIA "exploited the unification declaration, considering itself the sole legitimate jihad action group. Anyone who differs with it is considered an apostate who should be killed. And it sentenced to death FIS leaders inside and outside the country." The bulletin added: "It also killed Shaykh Abdelbaki Sahraoui, a very old man who spent most of his life promoting the jihad and God's cause. His only crime was that he differed with the GIA and its line, and he remained loyal to the FIS' line. It also killed the two brothers 'Izz-al-Din Ba'ah [as transliterated] and Abdelnaser Tetraoui, announcing this in an official statement."

The bulletin went on to say that Shaykh Mohamed Said "made a grave mistake when he joined those people in the belief that it was possible to contain and guide them to the right path to serve Islam. But the opposite happened. The GIA contained him and achieved through him political gains and credibility because he represented a known historic and Islamic symbol. When he rejected their views, differed with their ideas, and condemned their practices, which violate the Shari'ah, got rid of him in a tragic way which we do not wish for an influential Islamic figure like Mohamed Said."

GIA Amir Said Held Hostage by 'Extremist Group'

MM1812123595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Dec 95 p 6

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Reports from Algeria Say Islamic Armed Group's Leader Taken Hostage"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — Reports from Algeria yesterday said that Djemal Zitouni (Abu-'Abd-al-Rahman Amin), leader of the Armed Islamic Group [GIA], was taken "hostage" after disagreements within GIA wings. These reports follow the confirmation by GIA circles of last week's AL-HAYAH reports concerning the assassination last month of Shaykhs Mohamed Said and Abderrazak Radjam in Medea, south of Algiers.

In its issue distributed on Friday, of which AL-HAYAH has obtained a copy, the AL-ANSAR bulletin said that Said and Radjam were killed "while defending this religion. They were killed, under the GIA's banner, in one of Islam's battles against ignorance, to show people that the jihad's way is blood and martyrdom and not chairs and political trips."

In response to AL-HAYAH's request for details on Said's and Radjam's assassination (by one of the GIA groups), the AL-ANSAR bulletin, close to the GIA, said: "We confirm that they were killed some two months ago in an ambush by the idol [taghut].... The reason for not circulating the report at the time was that the GIA did not want to give the idol any reason to be happy about achieving its goal of assassinating the two mujahidin." It added that their killing "only reaffirmed that the mujahidin are adamant about pursuing the jihad under the GIA's banner. We are convinced of the falsehood of the malicious rumors trying to take advantage of the news to reinforce its false doctrine and heretical tendency and spread calumnies in order to split the ranks and undermine the GIA supporters' confidence in it."

In response also to AL-HAYAH's reports about the shaykhs' assassination after the GIA had proscribed their death, AL-ANSAR said that the GIA would have announced it, had it really been the case, since it previously announced that it "had proscribed the death of some of its members and announced it publicly, without any fear whatsoever of blame."

However, AL-HAYAH yesterday received new information indicating that one of the groups affiliated to the

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GIA carried out the killings of the two shaykhs Said and Radjam. The information indicates that Djemal Zitouni, the GIA's amir [leader], is being held hostage by a GIA extremist group. Although these reports have yet to be confirmed, there are some indications that they might be true.

Among these indications is the fact that no statement has been made by the GIA's amir for a month. It is even more unusual that he has not commented on the Algerian presidential elections held a month ago in which President Zeroual was elected. Information provided by a "penitent", saying that the GIA's leader is only a "figurehead", corroborates the reports about Zitouni's situation. [passage omitted]

Security Services Kill 45 'Criminals'

LD1712172395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the security services released today said that their forces had killed 45 criminals in different search operations in Oum El Bouaghi, Batna, Setif, Souk Ahras, Blida, Tiaret and Relizane, including 24 criminals in Oum El Bouaghi Province.

The security forces also succeeded in recovering a quantity of weapons and ammunition.

Egypt

U.S. Secretary of State Christopher Arrives

NC1712124795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1120 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak received U.S. secretary of State Warren Christopher today. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs; U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Edward Walker; and Mark Paris, private assistant to the U.S. President.

Holds News Conference With Mubarak

NC1712181695 Cairo MENA in English 1400 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak said it is high time for the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese track to get moving. The president stressed during a joint international press conference he held with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher here today, that the now [last word as received] has a good impression that there is hope for achieving progress on this track.

At the press conference held after the wrapping up of talks between the president and Christopher, President Mubarak also noted that the United States is a full partner in the peace process and that the efforts it has exerted led to the signing of several agreements. We need the role of the United States which we see as very important, the president said.

On prospects for a summit meeting between President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, President Mubarak said that he hopes this would happen.

However, the president remarked that it is too early to talk about such a summit. Replying to a question about the possibility for a more active role by Egypt regarding the Syrian-Israeli peace course, the president said there is a visible and another invisible role, for Egypt.

The president noted that Egypt works with the Syrian and Israeli sides for reaching an agreement, stressing that he has had a good feeling that there is some progress on this track since his meeting with President al-Asad a month a ago and his recent meeting with Peres in Cairo. The president emphasized that there is much hope and that the two sides — the Syrians and the Israelis — display flexibility now and hopes they will reach an agreement in the near future.

A new chapter was opened in the pace process, he said.

Warren Christopher said President Husni Mubarak is a close friend to the United States and has an active role in the Middle East peace process.

He refered to Egypt's economic role in the region and the setting up of a regional bank for economic cooperation to be based in Cairo. He, as well, refered to the economic conference slated to be held in Cairo next year.

Christopher said he briefed President Mubarak on his talks in Syria and Israel indicating there is a good chance of achieving progress on this track.

The U.S. secretary of state said he discussed with President Mubarak the situation in Bosnia. He added that during his present tour, he discussed with Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat the execution of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement and was briefed by 'Arafat on the process of Palestinian elections.

At the start of the press conference, President Husni Mubarak said he held a "fruitful" meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. They will work seriously for pushing forward the peace process and the United States is exerting great efforts in the this respect, he said.

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He said he touched during his meetings with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, Israeli Premier Shim'on Peres, and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher a hope for pushing forward the Syrian and Lebanese peace tracks with Israel.

Syrian-Israeli negotiations will resume on December 27 in the United States as was declared, he said referring to great hopes that the peace process will move forward until a comprehensive agreement is reached for the whole Middle East cause.

Christopher then said he was accustomed whenever he visits the Middle East to meet with President Mubarak and review with him developments of conditions and the peace process as they consider him a good partner besides being a close friend whose role is appreciated in boosting the Middle East peace process.

Christopher also appreciated the important role of Egypt in the regional economic cooperation domain. Cairo will be the headquarters of the Middle East economic conference in November 1996. Cairo will also be the seat of the Middle East development bank, he said.

U.S. Vice President Al Gore will visit Egypt within the framework of Mubarak-Gore initiative, he said.

Christopher said the meetings which President Mubarak held with each of President Hafiz al-Asad and Israeli Premier Peres constituted a good groundwork for progress. He added he and President Mubarak feel that conducting intensive negotiations is an important step on the road between Syria and Israel, however he noted they look forward to the support of President Mubarak in this respect. Christopher said he discussed with President Mubarak a number of topics. They dealt with the situation in Iraq and Bosnia. The main topic tackled was the unique contribution of Egypt and the United States for achieving stability and peace in the Middle East.

When questioned about his declaration in 1992 that the United States is ready to afford security arrangements in the Golan in case this was the desire of the concerned parties, Christopher said the concerned parties have not yet reached this point. The fact that security arrangements and whether or not U.S. forces or international forces will be required as security guarantees have not been dealt with at this time.

In response to another query, President Mubarak said the United States is a sponsor of the peace process that it started with Egypt, then with Jordan and the Palestinians. With the help of the United States, a number of agreements were reached, he said. President Mubarak said the active role assumed by the United States is very important to help to achieve peace. It is premature to speak about a meeting between Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and Israeli Premier Shim'on Peres President Mubarak said.

On the other hand, Christopher said difficulties still remain to be dealt with, which require hard effort, and the parties concerned should be serious about achieving progress.

President Mubarak indicated that there is a good chance to of achieving progress along the Syrian-Israeli peace track as the two sides are keen on reaching an agreement. In response to a query on the issues which Christopher discussed with Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat, the U.S. secretary of state said he met with 'Arafat yesterday in Jericho, and the main issue they discussed was the implementation of the provisional agreement and the progress so far realized. The Palestinian elections to be held in the self-rule territories were also dealt with, Christopher said.

Christopher said they discussed with 'Arafat security issues in the West Bank and quoted 'Arafat as underlining the need to maintain security so as to maintain the progress so far achieved.

Another topic discussed was the convening of a donor countries conference which will be held on 9 January. Christopher said he will amend his previous commitments to be able [to] attend this conference as the Palestinians should be boosted by the international community to proceed along the coming stage and execute the transition agreement.

President Mubarak was asked if he would assume an active role for boosting Syrian-Israeli negotiations due to start on December 27 in the United States.

The two parties will go to the United States which is a full partner in the peace process and Egypt at present works behind the scenes with the two sides and encourages them to proceed forward, he said.

In answer to his expectations regarding Egyptian-U.S. relations in the light of partnership agreement, Christopher said partnership between Egypt and the U.S. is extending and is based on deep and sound foundations and the best evidence to this is the committee called "Mubarak-Al Gore".

Regarding progress at the economic level, Christopher refered to a number of joint ventures in this domain as well as partnership between the two countries at other levels. Egypt will also assume a very important [role] as of next month as a member of the Security Council.

Christopher said during his meeting with President Mubarak today they focused on Syria referring that the Egyptian president assumed an important role at the

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level of both Palestinian and Jordanian peace tracks. He added they work together in dealing with regional [and] international issues.

Asked if he felt during his tour in the region Israel's readiness to complete withdrawal from the Golan in lieu for complete peace with Syria, Christopher said the United States aims at achieving comprehensive peace in the region. We are all aware that peace would not be comprehensive except when Syria and Lebanon sign a peace accord with Israel, he said.

Asked whether the United states is at present ready to develop bilateral relations with Syria, Christopher said they concentrate at the present stage on the peace process. However, he noted that U.S. contacts with Syria for pushing forward the peace process would positively reflect on developing bilateral relations between Washington and Damascus.

Mubarak on Syria-Israel Moves, Other Issues

MM1512161595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Dec 95 p 1

[Interview with President Husni Mubarak by Chief Editor Jihad al-Khazin in Cairo on 14 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Khazin] How do you view the effect of the recent legislative elections on democracy in Egypt, especially in view of the opposition's representation in the new parliament and the violent incidents during the elections?

[Mubarak] There are representatives for the opposition parties, but the level of violence is new. There were stern instructions regarding neutrality in the elections. The government and the police complied and never interfered at all.

The elements that sparked off violence in some constituencies were supporters of the candidates themselves. Do not forget that there were more than 4,000 candidates — which resulted in a tough competition. Some of these supporters belong to tendencies whose history is characterized by violence. Supporters of other candidates from other tendencies resorted to some types of violence, using some of its tools that we have never heard of before. It is something uncommon in Egypt. True, there were killings and assaults in some election campaigns before the revolution, because the feudal lords controled certain areas and insisted on winning there — which sparked off violent actions. Thus the strange thing is for violence to erupt now, after the disappearance of the feudal class.

I stress that the government did not interfere with the election results, nor did the police. Clashes occurred among candidates and their supporters. Some of the clashes were very violent — which is regarded as very strange in Egypt.

I believe that the elections represent a pause for examination. Some candidates persisted in describing the elections as fair, but when they failed to obtain the necessary votes, they began to say that they had been rigged.

At any rate, there are opposition representatives in parliament. There are six members from the Wafd Party, five from the [National Progressive Unionist] Grouping party, one from the Liberal Party, one from the Nasirite Party, and one from the Labor Party. Regardless of the number representing each party, the views of all the parties will be represented in the parliament. They can take part in debating every act of legislation and issue and play their role without any restriction, and we should not forget that the new assembly will include scores of independent representatives. I expect these to play a role in enriching parliamentary life.

[Al-Khazin] Would you have prefered to have more oppositionists in the parliament?

[Mubarak] I would, but it is the will of the people.

[Al-Khazin] What do you expect with regard to the peace process, especially the Syrian-Israeli track? Do you sense a breakthrough in the situation leading to a resumption of the negotiations with the help of the United States?

[Mubarak] I believe that there is a transformation, whether from Israel's side or from President Hafiz al-Asad himself. When I met with him he displayed flexibility, and Israel has displayed understanding of Syrian demands. I now believe that the process will achieve progress. The Israelis are preparing their public opinion for the withdrawal from the Golan, and President al-Asad is preparing his people to accept the solution and the new situation.

[Al-Khazin] Will the moves on this track be quick?

[Mubarak] There is hope of a quick move. I hope from my heart that the process will resume in order to complete the peace and begin to focus on development to achieve the interests of all the peoples of the region.

[Al-Khazin] Are there contacts with Jordan regarding the disagreement over the speed of normalization with Israel?

[Mubarak] We have no disagreement with Jordan. These rumors are circulated by some newspapers. There is no disagreement at all. King Husayn is in constant contact with me. The most recent communication was 15 days ago during his visit to London. Prince Hasan

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too contacted me. The talk about disagreements is fabricated.

With regard to normalization, Jordan's circumstances differ from Egypt's. Jordan's population is 4 million, thus the normalization process is easy as regards the [geographical] and work relations, and there are links with the West Bank and through the Palestinians here and there. We in Egypt are not preventing anyone from normalizing [with Israel]. The situation is now much better than before, but you cannot impose normalization on people. There are still forces opposed to normalization. We have people in Egypt who deal with Israel in various activities, in addition to the existence of joint enterprises.

[Al-Khazin] Will Qatar's position on the appointment of the new Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] secretary general affect the course of the Damascus Declaration states' next meeting, given that Jamil al-Hujaylan will have not assumed his duties by then?

[Mubarak] I do not believe so. That has nothing to do with it; it concerns the GCC.

[Al-Khazin] But the Qatari foreign minister said that his country would withdraw from any GCC or Damascus Declaration meeting that was attended by the new secretary general.

[Mubarak] If Qatar boycotts the council, it will be the loser. If there is a dispute, it should be resolved in the GCC framework without adversely affecting other issues. It is not in Qatar's interests to expand the scope of the dispute.

[Al-Khazin] We have noted some development with regard to economic and trade relations between Egypt and Iraq in recent months. Is there anything new as regards diplomatic relations?

[Mubarak] Nothing new at all. We comply with the Security Council resolutions. And Iraq must implement them so that the sanctions can be lifted.

[Al-Khazin] But what is the nature of recent contacts with Iraq?

[Mubarak] They fall within the framework of alleviating the Iraqi people's suffering. If they buy any necessities from Egypt, this is within the framework of the Security Council resolutions, and we inform the council of them.

[Al-Khazin] Do you expect a change in the regime?

[Mubarak] We have nothing to do with their internal affairs. We refuse to interfere in the internal affairs of any state. Saddam's remaining or not is an internal responsibility for the Iraqi people. We have nothing to do with it at all.

[Al-Khazin] We have noted a state of calm between Egypt and Sudan. Does this indicate developments in the efforts to resolve disagreements between the two countries, or is it the calm before the storm?

[Mubarak] There are no developments. They [Sudan] are the cause of the disagreements. The regime in Khartoum is sheltering terrorists. We could have dealt with it differently in this connection. That regime accuses us of sending tanks to southern Sudan. We have not sent tanks. Egypt's position is clear: We are against partitioning Sudan, we will never help to partition it, and we will resist anyone who tries do so.

Mubarak Interviewed on Terrorism, Other Topics

NC1512201695 Cairo 'AQIDATI in Arabic 12 Dec pp 3,5,7

[Interview with President Husni Mubarak by 'AQIDATI Board Chairman Samir Rajab and Chief Editor al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Ra'uf; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['AQIDATI] Events have proven that terrorism is an international phenomenon that has nothing to do with Islam and Muslims. Why have countries not agreed so far on a treaty or an international charter to confront this international phenomenon? Is there an agreement on Arab cooperation in this regard?

[Mubarak] I have affirmed in previous statements and interviews that terrorism has no religion. The terrorists have no religion. They hide behind religion but it is innocent of them. Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, and other societies have suffered from terrorism, therefore, terrorism is an international and not a local phenomenon. It is not confined to certain societies. I have warned the states that shelter terrorists that one day their turn will come to suffer from the fire and evil of terrorism.

It was only recently that most states and governments realized the danger of terrorism. I believe that now there is awareness of this danger, which threatens national security and stability, threatens relations among nations, and threatens regional and world peace. There is now a universal tendency to confront terrorism. I continue to reiterate that terrorism is a worrisome phenomenon that harms all states, therefore, there should be coordination to confront and contain terrorism because its danger threatens all states without exception. Events have proven this. Regionally, we have succeeded in convincing the Arab countries of the danger of terrorism. Decisions have been made to coordinate security and agreements have been signed on the extradition of criminals. This must be done on the international level as well.

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['AQIDATI] Egypt has suffered from terrorist acts and crimes. Are there social or environmental reasons for terrorism? Do social and economic conditions, unemployment, unsatisfactory distribution of income, administrative corruption, and the existence of slum areas contribute to the spread of terrorism? Do the weakness of Islamic teaching curricula in schools and universities encourage terrorism and prepare youths to accept and adopt extremist ideas?

[Mubarak] I do not agree with this idea. Many arrested terrorists were not unemployed; they had businesses, jobs, and incomes. The terrorists in Japan, for example, were not motivated by poverty. The Sublime Truth organization in Japan had huge wealth. It had helicopters and factories for manufacturing poison gas. The same situation exists in other rich countries that suffer from terrorism. Our efforts to confront social and economic problems are not motivated by a desire to confront terrorism but primarily to improve living standards and ease the people's suffering. We seek to do this by developing slum areas, solving their problems, and developing Upper Egypt. We are also implementing major national development projects. We thank God that the development plans have begun to yield results.

Regarding the weakness of the religious curricula in schools, this is also a mistaken concept. The comprehensive streamlining of the teaching curricula accounts for supporting religious education and developing its programs and promoting the sublime concepts of the great Islamic religion. Religious education curricula have been revised by a group of skilled al-Azhar scholars as part of the comprehensive streamlining of the education system.

['AQIDATI] Regarding the economic conferences held in Morocco and Jordan, it was rumored that they were an attempt to impose Israel's acceptance in the Arab world. What is your view on this and is the U.S. decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem part of this attempt?

[Mubarak] We must not be irritated and annoyed by these issues. These conferences discuss general topics and issues in which scores of states and hundreds of experts and economists take part. We all aspire to peace and work collectively to achieve it. We are not isolated from the world. We only commit ourselves to what is in the interest of our people and Arab nation. I believe that peace will open the door for economic cooperation on the bilateral, regional, and international levels.

Regarding the transfer of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, I have explained that Egypt opposes this decision and does not recognize it, regardless of the justifications and reasons given by the U.S. Congress. As is known, Jerusalem's final status will be decided in the final phase of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, in accordance with the agreement signed between the two sides, therefore, we must anticipate events. We do not deal with such topics emotionally or through ill-advised reactions; we maintain calm and use a natural manner that uses every circumstance to serve Egypt's interests. Anyway, the U.S. Administration itself does not approve of the Congress' decision to transfer the embassy.

['AQIDATI] You have played a great role in supporting al-Azhar and honoring Muslim scholars. What is your view of those who are attempting to fabricate a crisis between al-Azhar and the state? What are you expecting from the Muslim scholars?

[Mubarak] In fact, we are interested in al-Azhar as a beacon of Islam that has graduated fine scholars and preachers, helped develop human thought, and achieved progress for humanity out of the tolerant values of Islam. Furthermore, al-Azhar undoubtedly enjoys a special status as point of reference in the Islamic world, therefore, it is inconceivable and illogical that there could be differences between al-Azhar and the state. I call on scholars and preachers to open up to scientific achievements and to respond to the spirit of the age. This is in harmony with the spirit of Islam, which is the religion of moderation and which is far removed from narrow-mindedness. In addition to our interest in al-Azhar, we pay attention to all establishments and societies that work in the field of education, culture, and sound Islamic enlightenment.

['AQIDATI] Mr. President, it is observed that the Arab nation is in disarray. Is there hope that Arab solidarity will be restored?

[Mubarak] I am always optimistic. There is hope that Arab solidarity will be restored but we must not rush events. There was strong Arab solidarity until Iraq invaded Kuwait. This invasion dealt a strong blow to Arab solidarity. There is now enmity and bitterness that we must work hard to remove. This will take time. We are eager to continue these efforts and contacts through cooperation and coordination with the fraternal Arab leaders.

['AQIDATI] We are celebrating the third anniversary of the birth of 'AQIDATI newspaper. What have you to say on this occasion?

[Mubarak] The press plays an important role in serving society. The mission of the press is to serve society and build it, develop it, tackle its issues and problems, and reflect its ambitions and hopes. The newspaper 'AQIDATI has followed this course. On your third

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anniversary, I wish it many happy returns. I also wish further progress and achievement in the interest of Egypt and the beloved Egyptian people.

Musa on Foreign Visits, Bosnia 'Criminals'

NC1512125295 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1052 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Dec (MENA) — The Joint Egyptian—Pakistani Ministerial Committee will hold its first meeting tomorrow, Saturday [16 December]. It will be chaired by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali who will arrive in Cairo later today for a three-day visit.

Announcing this today, Musa said the committee's meetings follow the incident which the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad was subjected to last month. He added that it is natural for cooperation on fighting terrorism be discussed between Egypt and Pakistan, especially after terrorist attacks spread worldwide. This, he noted, requires concerted efforts and international cooperation to combat this world-wide phenomenon.

He said the Egyptian side will hear a briefing on the latest results and developments on the Pakistani investigation into the criminal attack on the Egyptian Embassy.

The two-day meetings of the Egyptian-Pakistani committee will also tackle various aspects of political, economic, cultural, and tourism ties. Four accords on cultural and economic cooperation will be signed at the end of the meetings. The first accord is on preventing dual taxation; the second is on an executive program for cultural, scientific, and technical cooperation; the third is to include a memorandum of understanding on tourism; and the fourth is on maritime transport.

The foreign minister noted that these accords will contribute to boosting cooperation and trade exchange between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Musa said Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi will visit Cairo tomorrow, Saturday, for a two-day official visit during which he will convey a message from Nigerian President Sani Abacha to President Husni Mubarak. He added that he and the Nigerian minister will hold talks on bilateral relations, situation in Africa, and coordination between the two countries on important African and regional issues.

The foreign minister announced that Madagascar's Foreign Minister Alfred Fela [name as transliterated] is expected in Cairo later today for talks on bilateral cooperation.

Commenting on the trial of ethnic cleansing criminals in Bosnia, Musa reiterated that Egypt views it as a key issue on which there will be no concession. He added that any concession on this issue is regarded as a concession on all human rights because the two are closely linked. He continued, any concession will discredit the work for human rights. He noted that many countries, led by the United States, several European countries, and Islamic countries, share Egypt's stand.

Concluding his statements, the foreign minister announced that he will lead Egypt's delegation to meetings of the [OAU] committee tasked with resolving disputes, due to be held in Addis Ababa on 17 and 18 December. The meeting will discuss terrorism in Africa, the attack on President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, and the situation in Rwanda, Burundi, and Somalia.

Interior Minister on 'Terrorist' Leaders in Britain

NC1512214695 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2115 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Dec (MENA) — Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has stated that it is a gross error for any state to grant political asylum to terrorists who are merely killers and butchers.

In a statement to be published in the 16 December issue of AKHBAR AL-YAWM, al-Alfi said that the security services have information that [Egyptian] terrorist leaders living in Britain have become increasingly active recently. These terrorist leaders are activating their elements worldwide and entrusting them with terrorist missions.

Al-Alfi expressed the belief that the British people and Government will not allow such acts. They will also not allow British soil to be used for the activity of these terrorist elements who seek to destroy, subvert, and kill innocent people.

He noted that the recent uncovering of a terrorist plot in Egypt demonstrates the importance of international cooperation against this danger to humanity.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Arrives on Visit

Vows To Pursue 'Terrorists'

NC1612153895 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1345 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Dec (MENA) — Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad has stated that during his current visit to Egypt the first meeting of the Egyptian-Pakistani Ministerial Joint Committee will be held. He noted that he will discuss with Egyptian officials bilateral relations as well as the

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situation in the region, particularly since Egypt and Pakistan are linked by strong ties and have many things in common.

Speaking to reporters today, the Pakistani official added that he will express to Egyptian officials the sorrow of his government and people for the terrorist incident against the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad, as well, as the precious Egyptian and Pakistani souls lost in the incident. He reiterated the Pakistani Government's determination to continue to pursue terrorists and put an end to this tragic chapter of events. He hoped that his visit will contribute toward consolidating the fraternal links between the two countries in all fields. He pointed out that the joint committee will help strengthen trade, economic, and technical bilateral relations to be on par with the excellent political relations and the close rapprochement between the two countries' leaders.

The Egyptian-Pakistani talks are scheduled to begin later today under the chairmanship of Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and his Pakistani counterpart. The Pakistani official arrived here last night on a two-day official visit to Egypt.

Talks Begin

NC1612205295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1955 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Dec (MENA) — The Egyptian-Pakistani joint committee began its meetings at the Foreign Ministry this evening under the chairmanship of Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and his Pakistani counterpart Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali. The committee will discuss several issues of mutual interest, notably ways to combat international terrorism and the results achieved so far by the Pakistani investigation into the bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad.

The two delegations will discuss the ongoing efforts to boost the two countries' cooperation in combating the international terrorist phenomenon and ways of eliminating it for the good of both sides.

The committee will also discuss Middle East developments, the current efforts to attain peace on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, the latest developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the wake of the peace agreement signed in Paris on Thursday [14 December], and the participation of Egypt and Pakistan in the multinational peacekeeping force in that country.

At the conclusion of the joint committee meetings, Egypt and Pakistan will sign several cooperation agreements .

Prior to the joint committee meeting this evening, 'Amr Musa and Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali held a private meeting during which they reviewed important international and regional issues of mutual interest and ways of boosting bilateral ties in various fields.

Musa, Asif Ali Hold News Conference

NC1612214695 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa held a joint news conference with Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali at the conclusion of the Egyptian-Pakistani joint committee meeting this evening.

The foreign minister announced at the beginning of the news conference that the two countries signed several agreements at the end of the meeting which dealt with several issues of mutual interest. He noted that agreement was reached to boost bilateral ties in various spheres, particularly the economic sphere.

Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi received the Pakistani foreign minister at an earlier time today. President Husni Mubarak is expected to receive him tomorrow morning, Sunday [17 December]. The Pakistani foreign minister stated that his government is seeking to strengthen its ties with Egypt.

Asked about the latest investigation developments into the bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad, the Pakistani minister said that the investigation is continuing and Pakistan is keeping Egypt informed of any new developments.

Asked if there are bombing suspects in the Philippines, the Pakistani foreign minister replied that the Pakistani interior minister is visiting Manila to discuss this issue in the context of broader talks with the Philippines. He added that the Pakistani Government is adopting measures to prevent other bombings.

Asked if any suspects have been seized, the Pakistani minister said that Pakistan has one suspect in custody. He is a Canadian national of Egyptian origin who is believed to have been the bombing's financier.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa explained that contacts are under way to cooperate with Pakistan in the investigation into the embassy bombing.

Asif Ali Meets 'Atif Sidqi

BK1712101395 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has apprised the Egyptian prime minister, Mr. 'Atif Sidqi, in Cairo about the situation in oc-

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cupied Kashmir and Indian atrocities there. He told the Egyptian prime minister that Indian forces have killed about 50,000 civilians and imprisoned and tortured thousands of others. He said India's intransigent attitude had destroyed peace in South Asia. The foreign minister thanked the Egyptian Government for the support on the Kashmir issue and said those countries, who have friendly relations both with Pakistan and India, should urge India to enter into serious negotiations with Pakistan and settle the Kashmir dispute.

Talking about the joint ministerial commission, the foreign minister said it will open new vistas of cooperation between the two countries in various fields. He also briefed the Egyptian prime minister about the economic development in Pakistan. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali conveyed the Egyptian prime minister the best wishes of the Pakistan prime minister, Benazir Bhutto. He also expressed grief over the loss of precious lives in the car bomb blast in the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad.

Addressing a joint press conference with his Egyptian counterpart, 'Amr Musa, the foreign minister underlined his country's commitment to arrest those behind the bombing attack at the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said Pakistan considers the bombing as an act of terrorism against two nations and not just Egypt. Replying to a question, he said Pakistan had handed over 10 people to Egypt since the two countries signed an extradition treaty in 1994.

Asif Ali on Embassy Blast

NC1712155395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1450 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Dec (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak received today a message from Pakistani President Sardar Farooq Leghari on the importance of bilateral cooperation in all fields.

The message was delivered to President Mubarak by Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali during their meeting this morning.

Following the meeting, the Pakistani foreign minister said he also handed President Mubarak an invitation to attend the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of Pakistan's independence to be held in March 1996. He added that he and President Mubarak discussed bilateral relations and exchanged views on the situation in southeast Asia, Kashmir's problem and the situation there, and the situation in Afghanistan.

Minister Sardar Asif Ali said that an agreement was reached at his meeting with President Mubarak on the need to exert efforts to establish peace in Afghanistan and to resolve the problem of Kashmir through negotiations between India and Pakistan.

He added that he extended Pakistan's condolences to President Mubarak on the victims of the terrorist operation that targeted the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad, stressing that his country will do all it can to uphold justice. He noted that the investigations are continuing and that the two governments are cooperating and the Egyptian side will be notified of all the information gathered from the investigations.

The Pakistani foreign minister went on to say: We believe that the two persons who blew up the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad were killed. There is now only one suspect, a Canadian of Egyptian origin who was arrested on the Pakistani borders. We suspect that he financed the terrorist operation and is now under arrest. He added: Once we know the identity of the persons who carried out this operation then we will know the reasons prompting this operation. He added: We suspect that the Canadian citizen used money to buy explosives and equipment which are not manufactured in Pakistan. He imported them and brought them across the borders.

On the evidence that the Pakistani authorities are relying on in accusing the Canadian, Sardar said: I do not know the details which is the responsibility of the investigations organs.

He added: Egypt had asked for extradition of 11 terrorists and 10 of them were arrested under Pakistan's laws and extradited, but the 11th terrorist was not found.

On the number of terrorists still in Pakistan, Sardar said: We do not know the number. He noted that there is a treaty for the extradition of criminals between the two countries. It is according to this treaty that Egypt gave us the names of the terrorists and the evidence against them. We extradited them according to our laws.

Asked for his view of terrorism, the Pakistani foreign minister said: We reject it under whatever name it takes, whether it is the name of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, or the Jewish faith. The man who killed the Israeli prime minister was a Jew. We do not differentiate between killers because they are killers regardless of their religion. Terrorism has negative effects on the world and all countries must cooperate to confront it.

About preventing a repeat of what happened to the Egyptian Embassy, the Pakistani foreign minister said: We, like the Egyptians, were shocked. Such a thing never happened before in Pakistan. The Egyptians and Pakistanis killed were innocent and all were Muslims. He added: We have taken stringent security measures to prevent a repetition. The Interior and Justice ministers

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have confirmed that the present security measures are very stringent.

He noted that the warning about a possible attack which the Egyptian Embassy relayed to the Pakistani authorities prior to the terrorist attack was general and not specific.

In reply to a question on whether the foreign ministry did not take this Egyptian warning seriously, Sardar Asif Ali said: We did take it seriously but there were routine obstacles. Coincidentally, there was a two-day holiday when the message was sent. We always try to take security measures [seriously] whether there are warnings or not.

He added that it is difficult to stop suicidal bombings as was the case in Oklahoma and the World Trade Center in New York where security measures were not lacking.

Says Financier of Blast Arrested

NC1812074395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0615 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA) — Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali says the bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad will not affect deep-rooted Egyptian-Pakistani relations. He said the two countries were the victims of terrorism.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM published today, the visiting Pakistani foreign minister added that the Pakistani Government is doing its best to bring to justice the criminals who blew up the embassy. He noted that a Canadian of Egyptian origin, Khidr 'Abd-al-Rahman, was arrested recently on charges of financing the criminal operation. Investigations continue to identify others involved in the blast, he added.

On Pakistan's view of the Middle East peace process, the Pakistani official welcomed the Palestinian-Israeli agreement and supported the Syrian stance in the negotiations. He stressed the need for a full Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights and added that his country is pleased to see progress in the regional peace process.

Ali emphasized that Pakistan is not considering diplomatic relations with Israel. Once comprehensive peace in the region is established, the Security Council resolutions implemented, and the future of Jerusalem is determined, then Israel could be recognized and diplomatic relations exchanged with it, he added. He said his country is not against recognition in principle but will take this step when the other friendly states in the region do so.

Asked about the problem of Kashmir, the Pakistani foreign minister said that peace must be established in Asia. Once the Kashmir problem is solved, all the other problems in Southeast Asia will be solved, he added.

Mubarak on Ties With Pakistan

BK1712165695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak said that relations between Egypt and Pakistan will be further consolidated in light of agreements reached at the Joint Ministerial Commission in Cairo. The Egyptian president stated this during his meeting with Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali, who called on him at the conclusion of Pakistan-Egypt Joint Ministerial Commission meeting. Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa was also present on the occasion. The Egyptian president expressed his fraternal sentiments to the people of Pakistan and his good wishes to President Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Earlier, the foreign minister conveyed good wishes from the Pakistani president and the prime minister. President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari expressed satisfaction over close cooperation with Egypt in all sectors, whereas Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto referred to efforts being made to enhance economic and commercial ties with Egypt. The foreign minister also handed a special message from President Leghari to President Mubarak, extending an invitation to him to attend the extraordinary summit conference of the Organization of Islamic Conference to be held in Pakistan. Expressing grief over the loss of valuable lives in the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad, he said Egypt and Pakistan are jointly confronting terrorism.

U.S. Senate Said Critical of Election Results

NC1512165595 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 11 Dec p 1

[Report by Muhammad Dalbah in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Text] There is growing U.S. criticism of the of the People's Assembly elections. Congress has joined the State Department in demanding an investigation into the accusations that the Egyptian Government tampered with and rigged the elections.

Our correspondent has learned from informed sources in the U.S. Senate that several prominent senators have tabled a resolution calling for an investigation of these accusations, particularly since the Egyptian Government receives $2.3 billion annually in U.S. economic and military aid.

A letter from Claiborne Pell, (a Democrat from Rhode Island) member of the U.S. Foreign Relations Committee and former chairman of the committee, noted that

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one of the conditions of U.S. aid is that the recipient state must work to expand democracy.

These sources said that Patrick Moynihan (a democrat from New York), another committee member, sent a letter to President Mubarak criticizing the campaign the government and its security services launched against the People's Assembly candidates.

Daniel Peletica [name as published], assistant to Jesse Helmes, chairman of the U.S. Foreign Relations Committee, strongly criticized the parliamentary elections in Egypt, describing them as "the least democratic elections in the Arab region."

Opposition Parties Issue Statement on Elections

NC1512182195 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 11 Dec p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Egyptian opposition parties and trends have stated that they are in the process of initiating a unified political campaign to put an end to the government's flagrant rigging of the election. They reiterated their full moral and material backing for all the constitutional and legal motions challenging the results of the recent People's Assembly elections. They called on parties, trade unions, and professional associations to combine their efforts to protect the freedom of the Egyptian people from rigging and coercion, to topple the false People's Assembly, and to form a neutral government for holding new elections under international supervision.

The above came in a statement issued by opposition leaders at a news conference held at the Nasirite Party headquarters on 9 December. The statement was signed by the Nasirite, Wafd, Labor, Liberal, and Egypt Arab parties, the Muslim Brotherhood, and several public figures. The National Progressive Unionist Grouping declined to sign the statement. The following is the text of the statement:

The leaders and representatives of the opposition parties and forces, while denouncing the extensive acts of violence and rigging that marred the Egyptian parliamentary election in its first and second rounds, declare their determination to work together by democratic, constitutional, and legal means to topple the "People's Assembly," which falsified the voters' will; and to declare it legally void as it challenges the judicial rulings that nullified the election in most constituencies and since it lacks the legitimacy of representing the nation's will.

The leaders and representatives of the opposition parties and forces declare that this assembly does not reflect the will of the people and that any new elections that lack the political and legal guarantees and that are devoid of full judicial supervision will produce the same results. One of the guarantees that the opposition parties are currently studying is making available "international observation" of the general elections, after blatant rigging had reached limits unprecedented in our entire modern history. The opposition herewith declares that it is in the process of initiating a common political campaign to put an end to the government's flagrant violations of the Egyptian citizen's right to exercise his election rights freely and fairly and without violence or rigging. It is also in the process of contacting Egyptian and international public figures who enjoy high moral standing, foreign democratic parties and trends, and human rights organizations to solicit their solidarity with the "public freedoms" issue in Egypt. These freedoms are now facing the risk of being totally wiped out. The opposition underlines the crucial importance of reopening the door to dialogue to draft and endorse a "national accord document" that would aim for a broad democratic transformation in society and the regime.

The opposition parties and forces declare their full moral and material backing for all constitutional and legal motions challenging the outcome of the elections. They call on professional associations and trade unions, particularly the Journalists and Lawyers Syndicates, to combine their efforts to safeguard the question of "public freedoms" from violence, coercion, and rigging and to defend the Egyptian people's right to enjoy their constitutional and democratic rights and to have free and clean parliamentary elections without coercion or usurping of will. This is particularly true since the violations that occurred in the elections constitute part of a campaign whose pace was accelerated last year against public freedoms, professional associations, and elections rights in several important areas, such as universities and villages, not to mention the violation of the right of defendants in political cases to stand before a civil judge rather than being tried before a military court.

Paper Reports Plan To Assassinate Ministers, Others

NC1812072595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0600 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Dec (MENA) — The newspaper AL-'ARABI, the mouthpiece of the Nasirite Arab Democratic Party, today quotes a responsible security source saying that a recently arrested suicide terrorist group planned to assassinate political figures and ministers, including Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif, Education Minister Husayn Baha'-al-Din, Tourism Minister Mamduh al- Biltaji, and Culture Minister Faruq Husni, claiming that they corrupt the people and play a role in "combating Muslim youth."

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According to security sources, the terrorist group planned to carry out its first operation on Saturday [16 December] during a joint session of the People's Assembly and Consultative Council addressed by President Mubarak. A booby-trapped car parked near the rear wall of the People's Assembly, where a garage is being built to house parliamentarians' cars, was to be detonated by remote control.

For the past two months the External Operations Division at the State Security Intelligence Department has been watching the movements of terrorists Mahmud al-Sayyid Sha'ban and Nabil 'Abd-al- Rahman, who left London for Khartoum before arriving near the Egyptian-Sudanese border. There, they met five Sudanese citizens: Ahmad Sayyid, Sa'id Muhammad, Hasan 'Id, Hamid 'Abdallah, and Mubarak al-'Abid. They all used a car to transport the group members, weapons, and forged documents and certificates. Approximately 200 km from the Egyptian-Sudanese border their car broke down. The Sudanese citizens arranged transport for some weapons and documents, which they hid inside a mountain cave. The remaining weapons were smuggled inside the country and stored at the home of Yusuf al-Jundi in Kirdasah.

Armed with adequate evidence and a permit from the State Security Prosecution Department, forces from the State Security Intelligence Department in four governorates attacked the group's hideouts. Among the defendants is Yusuf al-Jundi, whose wife hid the weapons with her brother-in-law Khalid Rizq, a member of the dissolved Muslim Brotherhood, who admitted the incident. The Interior Ministry has refered all the defendants, including the Sudanese, to the Higher State Security Prosecution.

In an exclusive statement to AL-'ARABI, Chief Prosecutor Hisham Saraya has stated that the defendants admitted getting instructions from Ayman al-Zawahiri and leading terrorists in London to carry out bombings and assassinations to undermine stability. They admitted that they were trained for the operation in Sudan. The prosecution informed the Sudanese Embassy in Cairo that it was interrogating the five arrested Sudanese. The defendants, 56 in total, were accused of joining an unlawful secret organization seeking to challenge the law and the Constitution, colluding to carry out operations disturbing security, and possessing unlicensed weapons.

Libya

Envoy Urges U.S. To Open 'Direct Dialogue' on Lockerbie

MM1812113195 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Dec 95 p 6

[Report by Ashraf al-Faqiyy: "Libya Renews Call for 'Direct Dialogue' With United States Over Lockerbie"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo — A Libyan diplomatic source in Cairo has urged the U.S. Administration to open a direct dialogue with Libya to resolve the Lockerbie crisis. The source said that his country has informed UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali of its "full response to the Security Council Resolutions."

In a statement to AL-HAYAH the source said that Libya "is serious in finding a solution to this crisis." The source pointed out that "Libya has nothing new to offer, and the Western insistence [al-israr al-gharbi], especially from Britain and the United States, will not resolve the issue or end the problem."

In a statement in Tunis the day before yesterday, Robert Peletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state, urged Libya to resume talks with the UN secretary general to end the Lockerbie problem — which the jamahiriyah considered a "positive development."

The source expressed Libya's willingness to receive any investigation team to attend the two Libyans' trial before the Libyan judiciary, and the Western investigation team can submit the evidence in its possession to the Libyan investigating judge. [passage omitted]

JANA Assails Pelletreau Remarks in Tunisia

LD1612000895 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The French news agency has quoted [Robert Pelletreau], U.S. assistant secretary of state, as saying in a news conference at the end of his visit to Tunisia that America would seriously consider any threat or aggression against Tunisia.

The JANA editor for Arab affairs has commented on the U.S. official's statement. He said: If Arab countries had escaped the danger of the aggressive conspiracies of the United States, its attempts at controlling their destinies and exploiting their wealth, and its schemes to occupy the Arab nation once again, they would have nothing to fear.

The editor wondered at this American triviality, saying: Does Tunisia so fear its brothers who are faithful to the issues of the Arab nation in Libya and Algeria as to wait for this dubious American attention?

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The editor stressed that what the American official said in this respect is typical of the way American policy is constructed in order to cause sedition. The United States uses this method, as history has taught us, to cause rifts even between brothers in order to break the ties of brotherhood. In this way it seeks to implement its colonialist schemes; there is no one in the world who has not been subjected to these.

The JANA Arab affairs editor concluded his comment by saying that if the Arab nation escapes the dangers of the United States and its conspiracies no harm will befall it.

Al-Qadhdhafi Receives U.S. Nation of Islam Group

LD1512223995 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Proceeding from the call of the brother leader of the revolution on the 26th anniversary of the Great 1 September Revolution for the need to organize 10 million Muslims and Arabs in America who could have a say in the American election, the brother leader of the revolution received a high-level delegation of the Nation of Islam movement. The nation of Islam is headed by brother Louis Farrakhan, leader of the movement of the nation of blacks in America. The delegation is currently paying a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah in order to coordinate the action program launched by the march of 2 million blacks, which shook the American capital last October, and to begin the executive steps of the brother leader of the revolution's encouragement to the Muslims in America to obtain their rights and their right to independence and freedom on American soil.

During this meeting the Nation of Islam delegation informed the brother leader of the revolution of the situation of Muslims in America in general and the Nation of Islam in particular. They also informed the brother leader of their action programs to liberate the blacks in America through the Nation of Islam, which is a prominent body in international Islamic popular leadership.

The delegation gave the brother leader of the revolution a handwritten message from brother Louis Farrakhan in which he renewed his thanks and appreciation for the telephone call which al-Qadhdhafi made to him following the march of 2 million blacks in Washington. In that call the leader reaffirmed the Great Jamahiriyah's unlimited support for the Nation of Islam in America.

In his message, brother Louis Farrakhan asserted that Muslims in America are intent on perseverance and challenge to build their future and overcome injustice and persecution. He stated that the success of the march of 2 million blacks enhanced their status and made them stronger than ever before. He told the leader, in his message: We salute the steadfastness of the Arab people in Libya against the unjust American measures.

The brother leader of the revolution led the delegation members in the afternoon prayers. [passage omitted]

Further on Meeting

LD1612115595 Tripoli JANA in English 0837 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, Al Kanoun 16, Jamahiriya News Agency — On the basis of the call by the leader of the revolution on the 26th; the anniversary of the great Al Fateh revolution for the necessity to organize ten million Muslims and Arabs in America so as to have an influence in American elections, the leader of the revolution received an important delegation from the movement of the Nation of Islam headed by Louis Farrakhan, leader of the movement of the blacks nation in America, who are currently on a visit to the Great Jamahiriya to coordinate the practical programme which was launched by organizing the two million black men march which hit the American capital during the month of Al Timour past and starting the executive steps for the instigation the leader of the revolution called amonst Muslims in America to seize deservedly their rights and triumph for their right to independence and freedom on the soil of America.

During this meeting the delegation of the Nation of Islam briefed the leader of the revolution on the situations of Muslims in America in general and the Nation of Islam movement in particular.

Also the delegation briefed the leader on their practical programmes to liberate blacks in America through the movement of the nations of Islam, which is a leading member in the international people's Islamic leadership.

Also the delegation delivered to the leader of the revolution a letter from Louis Farrakhan reiterating his thanks for and pride in the telephone call which the leader of the revolution made to him following the two million blacks March in Washington in which the leader reaffirmed the unlimited support of the Great Jamahiriya for the movement of the Nation of Islam in America.

The leader of the revolution headed the members of the delegation in the afternoon in prayers.

In a speech on the 26th. Anniversary of the Great Al Fateh revolution, the leader of the revolution stressed the need to organize ten million Muslims and Arabs in America to have influence, like the Jews, in American elections which is a legitimate action and it is not a

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terrorist or a secret and the American Muslims and Arabs, a population of ten million, will take action, with the Libyan are people allocating 100 or even 1000 million dollars, for their mobilization so as to set up press, social and political institutions not for terrorism or secret action or subversion but to participate in the American elections on equal footing with the Jews and cast their votes to the candidate who serves the Arabs. We declare this and as from now that the forthcoming American elections we should enter them with ten million organized Muslims and Libya should shoulder this responsibility.

UK Decision To Expel Envoy Criticized

MM1412125095 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Dec 95 p 6

[Report by Ashraf al-Fiqqi: "Libya Criticizes Britain's Decision To Expel One of Its diplomats"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — Libya has again criticized Britain's decision to expel Khalifah Bazilya, head of its interests section in London, and described the decision as "hasty and unfounded." A Libyan diplomatic source in Cairo said that his country's decision to expel David Hawkes, head of the British interests section, comes as a retaliation and follows the principle of reciprocal treatment.

In a statement to AL-HAYAH, the source added that Britain's announcement to keep its options open in response to the Libyan decision "sounds like a threat, and is rejected."

He added: "If Libya has some interest in a rapprochement with Britain, the latter too has interests in Libya, including trade exchanges in the region of 1 billion pounds sterling, in favor of the British."

He admitted that there is a "crisis" currently in relations with Britain.

He said: "It seems that, having obtained the security information concerning the IRA, the British now want to confirm to the United States that their position on the Lockerbie crisis has not changed."

Talks Begin With Visiting Iranian Delegation

LD1612201595 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Joint Libyan Arab-Iranian talks on housing and services began this morning. The brother secretary of the General People's Committee for Tourism, brother 'Abbas Ahmad- Akhundi, the Iranian housing minister, and a number of experts and technicians were present at the talks. The Iranian ambassador to the Great Jamahiriyah also attended the meeting.

The brother secretary of the General People's Committee for Industry and Mines also met brother 'Abbas Ahmad-Akhundi this morning. The Iranian housing minister and an accompanying delegation are currently visiting the Great Jamahiriyah. At this meeting, the development of aspects of bilateral cooperation in the manufacture of construction materials and cement was discussed. The minutes of the joint Libyan-Iranian meetings were also reviewed during the talks.

Morocco

Palestinian Leader Qaddumi Arrives in Rabat

LD1512221495 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Faruq Qadddumi, foreign minister of Palestine, arrived today in Casablanca on a visit to Morocco. He is accompanied by a number of Palestinian officials.

The head of Palestinian diplomacy was welcomed at the airport by Abu Marwan, ambassador of Palestine in Rabat. He made a statement at Mohamed V International Airport:

[Begin Qaddumi recording] From time to time we come to our brothers here in Morocco and to his majesty to hold consultations on the developments in the area and especially in the Arab region and the Middle East. We are very anxious to establish a just and durable peace in the Middle East region. This is an Arab concern; therefore, we repeatedly come to fraternal Morocco to discuss these questions, especially after the Islamic conference, given that his majesty is the chairman of the Jerusalem Committee, Jerusalem has our special attention, and His Majesty King Hassan takes care of this question. The Islamic conference was briefed on his majesty's initiative to establish the Jerusalem Fund [Bayt Mal al-Quds]. This question is important and should find its place in the near future. We have to start the building of this valuable project. [end recording]

Leading Fundamentalist Released From House Arrest

LD1512134995 Rabat MAP in English 1329 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Dec 15 (MAP) — The leader of the banned Moroccan Muslim fundamentalist organization "Al-'Adl Wa al-Ihsan" (justice and charity), shaykh Abdessalam Yassine, is no longer under house arrest, Morocccan media reported here Friday.

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Shaykh Yassine has been under house arrest for five years now.

Moroccan opposition newspapers have welcomed Friday this measure taken by authorities, describing it as "a good news" for all human rights organizations and a step forward in consolidating the respect for the rule of law.

The news on the lifting of this administrative measure against the 67-year old Muslim fundamentalist leader, has not yet been confirmed officially. Three political parties from the opposition had asked on wednesday the Moroccan home minister to come to parliament to answer their question about this measure.

Yassine, who wrote several books on Islam, had served several prison sentences in the past.

Urges Nonviolence

LD1612112995 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamist opposition figure, Abdessalam Yassine, who is no longer under house arrest, was authorized on 15 December to deliver a sermon at a mosque in Sale, a town near the capital Rabat, during which he spoke in favor of political nonviolence.

House Arrest Reinstated

LD1712105695 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Moroccan Islamist leader Abdessalam Yassine is once again under house arrest after a two-day lull which enabled him to meet his friends and lead a religious service in front of several hundred supporters.

But according to his movement, Justice and Charity, he is once again under the regime of restrictions and surveillance that he has been under for six years.

House Arrest Lifted Again

LD1712222295 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In Morocco, the opposition leader, Abdessalam Yassine, is enjoying complete freedom once again this evening. He had just been placed back under house arrest again after having been authorized 48 hours ago to meet his supporters for the first time in six years. Mouna el Bana, you are on the line from Rabat. So, this evening the authorities have thus finally decided to give him complete freedom again, Mouna?

[El Bana] Yes, absolutely. The official decision of the authorities was not conveyed directly to Mr. Yassine. It was conveyed by the Prefecture to the Steering Committee of the association Justice et Bienfaisance [Justice and Charity], an organization of which he is the leader. This afternoon the police cordon around his house in Sale was lifted and Mr. Yassine was able once again to greet his supporters, dozens of whom were present. However, he declined to make any statement, noting that a news conference will be held at his home on Monday evening.

Since Friday morning, the greatest possible confusion has reigned over the lifting of the house arrest, announced on Thursday evening — the police presence was put back in place and visits were banned. This did not prevent Mr. Yassine from attending the mosque on Friday, where he was even able to preach for the first time in six years, once again advocating non-violence, while at the same time criticizing the government's economic and social policy.

Sudan

Bashir Warns Egypt Against Alignment With West

EA1612174895 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, president of the Republic, has reiterated Sudan's readiness to respond to all forms of aggression, referring in this respect to the Egyptian regime's provocations in the Hala'ib area. Addressing a ceremony held in honor of the martyrs of Hala'ib in al-Mawlid Square in Khartoum this afternoon [15 December], he said: We are not warmongers, nor do we engage in hostilities against the Egyptian people or their forces. He recalled Sudan's stance on the side of Egypt during its war against the Israeli enemy. His Excellency reaffirmed Sudan's [words indistinct] its cultural course and liberation of all its territories. He said: the banner of There Is No God But Allah has not fallen and we shall offer up our souls cheaply for its sake. The president declared that Sudan would not part with a single inch of its territory: We have sworn to protect our country and our faith from the filth of the enemies and their stooges.

He warned the Egyptian regime of the consequences of proceeding along the road of the West, which does not wish the Islamic nation well. He explained that the provocations and tribulations were consolidating the unity of the Sudanese people, elements of which were rushing to the various training camps and the arenas of jihad and martyrdom, a matter representing a serious lesson to all the states of the (?world) on the need

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to acquaint themselves with Sudan's modern history. Lieutenant General al-Bashir dwelt on the role of the Mahdist (?state) and its mujahidin in guiding Sudan and defending the faith [passage omitted]

Bashir: Sudan Targeted for Following Islamic Course

EA1612180295 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 2245 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, president of the Republic, has stressed the National Salvation Revolution's interest in the rural areas. He said the previous governments had not provided the citizens in the rural areas with any services. Addressing a mass rally in Umm Dam town in Umm Ruwabah Province the day before yesterday [13 December], His Excellency went on to say that all Sudanese had equal rights and duties.

His Excellency said Sudan was now facing many challenges due to its cultural course, which was being subjected to a media, economic, and diplomatic onslaught by the enemies of Islam. He added: Nevertheless, we have triumphed over all our enemies and have defeated the rebellion.

Lieutenant General al-Bashir called on the citizens to adhere to God's law in defense of the homeland and the faith. The president commended the youth for rushing to the operational areas. He also praised the operation to supply the mujahidin countrywide. He stressed the revolution's commitment to entrenching the faith, preserving security and stability and providing the citizens with all services. [passage omitted]

Bashir Meets With Visiting Hamas Delegation

EA1612181095 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, president of the Republic, met at his office in the Republican Palace this morning the delegation of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], representing all the regional movements [as heard].

Following the meeting, Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, said that the delegation had come to thank the president for his personal interest in the issues affecting the concerns of the Palestinian Arab people, and also the Sudanese Government and people for Sudan's expression of its readiness to host the inter-Palestinian dialogue to begin in Cairo next Monday [18 December].

The dialogue will be between Hamas and the ruling Palestinian Authority under the chairmanship of Mr. Yasir Arafat, the president of the state of Palestine.

He added that Lieutenant General al-Bashir had invited all Palestinians, regardless of their orientations, to rally to their cause, urging them to [word indistinct] agreement in order to preserve the Palestinian people's lives and blood and to recover all their usurped land. They should do so to frustrate the nation's enemies. He stressed that the Sudanese Government and people would support the Palestinian option.

U.S. Organization Said Recruiting Mercenaries

EA1512131495 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Lino Rol Deng, secretary general of the Supreme Council for Peace, has disclosed that a specialized American organization is recruiting mercenaries from African countries which support the rebel movement among [word indistinct] (?soldiers) who took part with Ugandan soldiers in their recent attack on Magwe and Parajok in the south of the country. He said that the Supreme Council for Peace, in coordination with the Foreign Ministry, will contact a number of organizations in African countries to enlighten the governments of those countries on the need to prevent them from [word indistinct]. His Excellency appealed to governments of African states to halt such actions, and to stand in solidarity for the protection of the region, and the maintenance of security, unity, and peace on African territory.

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Qatar

Amir Greets 'Arafat Upon Arrival in Doha

JN1812104395 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1020 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Doha, 18 Dec (WAKH) — Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat arrived in Doha at noon today on an official visit to the State of Qatar.

His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, amir of the State of Qatar, and ranking Qatari officials received the Palestinian president upon his arrival.

Yemen

Sanaa Accuses Eritrea of Attacking Red Sea Isle

AB1712132895 Paris AFP in English 1311 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 17 (AFP) — Yemen on Sunday [17 December] accused Eritrea of having landed military forces on the Red Sea island of Hanish al-Kabir by boat, killing and wounding several Yemenis.

Yemen accused Eritrea of "armed aggression" after landing on its territory Friday.

'Official Source' on Clash

EA1712170095 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An official source of the Yemeni Republic has informed the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA, of the following:

On Friday night, 15 December 1995, the Eritrean Armed Forces carried out a treacherous act of aggression and open piracy against the Yemeni island of Hanish al-Kabir, thereby violating the sovereignty of the Yemeni Republic's territorial waters. They also threatened international shipping in the Red Sea area. [passage omitted]

Troops Repel Attack

NC1712165995 Paris AFP in English 1444 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 17 (AFP) — Yemeni troops were fighting on Sunday [17 December] to repel an attack by Eritrean forces on the strategic Red Sea island of Hanish al-Kabir which has left several Yemeni soldiers dead and wounded, officials said here.

Officials said the attack began Friday when four Israeli-made speedboats deployed Eritrean forces on the island, which is halfway between the two countries and claimed by both.

Civilian ships brought more troops to the island where a garrison of 500 Yemeni troops are stationed, they added.

Several Yemeni soldiers have been killed in the fighting while helicopters have taken the wounded to the military hospital in the capital Sanaa, officials here said.

A government spokesman demanded a withrawal of the forces and vowed that Yemen would defend its "sovereignty over its land and territorial waters."

"Eritrean forces staged a cowardly attack and act of piracy against Hanish al-Kabir," the spokesman said.

He said Eritrea had issued a warning on November 11 to Yemeni citizens and troops, telling them "to leave the island and stop work on" building a tourist resort.

"It is regrettable the Eritrean government has staged this attack against Yemen instead of respecting the accord" reached on December 7 during a visit to Asmara by Yemen's Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, the spokesman said.

He said the two countries had agreed to resolve the conflict on the maritime border through negotiations, or take the case to the International Court of Justice at The Hague if the talks failed.

The dispute over the islands of Hanish al-Kabir, Hanish al- Saghir, and Jabal Zuqar, which control the northern access to the straits of Bab el Mandeb between the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (eds: correct), resurfaced last month.

Yemeni officials said Eritrean soldiers had staged a brief incursion in November on Hanish al-Kabir. The three islands had been used as a way station for the shipment of goods between Yemen and Eritrea.

Planes Provide Support

NC1712172495 Paris AFP in English 1535 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Report by Hammoud Mounassar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 17 (AFP) — Yemeni troops backed by warplanes fought Sunday [17 December] to repel an attack by Eritrean forces on a strategic Red Sea island which has left several Yemeni soldiers dead and wounded, officials said here.

Officials said the attack began Friday when four Israeli-made speedboats deployed Eritrean forces on the island of Hanish al-Kabir, which is halfway between the two countries and claimed by both.

Civilian ships brought more troops to the island where 500 Yemeni troops have been garrisoned since tension flared in November, officials said, asking not to be named.

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Several Yemeni soldiers have been killed in the fighting while helicopters have taken the wounded to the military hospital in the capital Sanaa, doctors here said.

There was no immediate comment from Eritrea.

Russian-made Sukhoi-20 fighter-bombers flew sorties from Sanaa every hour to back up troops on the island, which is 32 kilometers (20 miles) off the coast, officials said. Yemeni naval vessels were also dispatched.

A government spokesman demanded a withrawal of the Eritrean forces and vowed that Yemen would defend its "sovereignty over its land and territorial waters."

"Eritrean forces staged a cowardly attack and act of piracy against Hanish al-Kabir," the spokesman said.

He said Eritrea had issued a warning on November 11 to Yemeni civilians, telling them "to leave the island (along with the troops) and stop work on" building a tourist resort.

The spokesman called on Asmara "to immediately end this irresponsible attack, and resort to dialogue and peaceful means to preserve good neighborly relations.

"It is regrettable the Eritrean government has staged this attack against Yemen instead of respecting the accord" reached on December 7 during a visit to Asmara by Yemen's Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, the spokesman said.

He said the two countries had agreed to resolve the conflict on the maritime border through negotiations, or take the case to the International Court of Justice at The Hague if the talks failed.

The dispute over the islands of Hanish al-Kabir, Hanish al-Sughra, and Jabal Zuqar, which control the northern access to the straights of Bab el Mandeb between the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, surfaced last month.

Yemeni officials said Eritrean soldiers staged a brief incursion in November on Hanish al-Kabir. The three islands had been used as a way station for the shipment of goods between Yemen and Eritrea.

A Yemeni official accused Israel of recently giving patrol boats and telecommunications equipment to Eritrea in return for a pledge to hand over one of the Red Sea islands to use as an Israeli military base.

Official radio said that Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih sent a message to the US ambassador David Newton here which Western diplomats said concerned the conflict with Eritrea.

Britain, which withdrew from the former South Yemen in 1967, retained control over the islands until the 1970s, then handed them over to the South Yemeni authorities. The former North and South Yemen were unified in May 1990.

'A Number' of Troops Killed

JN1712170995 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Faysal Mukarram dispatch from Sanaa]

[FBIS Translated Text] Clashes erupted in the Red Sea between Yemen and Eritrea last Friday in the wake of a sudden attack launched by Eritrean gunboats on the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. A Yemeni military spokesman said that the Eritrean forces are using Israeli-made gunboats and civilian ferries to move their soldiers to the area of the clashes, which are still raging at this moment.

The Yemeni source said that the 500-man Yemeni garrison tried to repulse the Eritrean attack and prevented the Eritrean forces from approaching the island. The Yemeni forces were supported by navy units and the Yemeni Air Force which carried our many aerial sorties to prevent the Eritrean gunboats from penetrating the Yemeni territorial waters. Yemeni medical sources said a number of Yemeni soldiers were killed or wounded.

A Yemeni Government official held the Eritrean Government responsible for what happened and considered it aggression and piracy against Yemen's territorial water and integrity. The Yemeni official called on the Eritrean Government to immediately stop its aggression, remove all traces of it, and resort to peaceful dialogue, in accordance with the international charters.

These developments are considered the most serious since the beginning of November when Eritrea demanded three Yemeni islands in the Red Sea. The two sides held several rounds of talks and agreed recently on a peaceful solution or on seeking international arbitration if bilateral talks fail.

Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih cut short his winter vacation in Aden and returned, unannounced, to Sanaa yesterday, Saturday, following the recent developments in the Red Sea between Yemen and Eritrea.

Sanaa Reportedly Still in Control

NC1712184195 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with MBC correspondent Hammud Nassar in Sanaa by anchorman Antoine 'Awn in London — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Awn] Hammud, what are the latest developments in the islands of Hanish al-Kabir?

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[Nassar] According to the latest information that reached Sanaa tonight, the situation appears to be normal with the exception of some skirmishes and partial clashes around the island. According to Yemeni sources, the clashes that took place on Friday [15 December] night and Saturday were extensive and there was a concentrated attack. Today's operations were partial and there are no changes on the island. The Yemeni military garrison continues to control the situation on the island.

['Awn] Sanaa spoke about an Israeli involvement in the Eritrean landing. What is the evidence and are there Yemeni fears that the tension could spread to Hanish al-Saghir and Jabal Zuqar?

[Nassar] Regarding the accusations against Israel, Yemeni sources stressed that there is no official accusation against Israel. Yemeni political and party circles are saying, however, that Israel is supporting Eritrea's authorities and that it recently supplied Eritrea with gunboats and advanced military equipment. Sanaa currently does not fear the spread of the clashes to the other islands. The situation appears to be under control.

Eritrean Gunboat Hit

NC1712190695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1841 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 17 Dec (MENA) — A Yemeni military source said tonight that the Yemeni naval vessels succeeded in hitting one of four Eritrean missile boats during clashes that flared up this morning near the island of Hanish al-Kabir which is disputed by the two countries.

In a statement to the MENA correspondent in Sanaa, the military source said that the higher political command has issued orders to defend the Yemeni islands and expel the attacking forces.

The correspondent has learned that the Yemeni Armed Forces General Command has been in constant session since Friday [15 December] and is preparing to issue a communique later today on the battles raging in the south of the Red Sea.

Eritrean Envoy Summoned

JN1712211595 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ambassador Mahmod Ali Hirwi [name as transliterated], Eritrea's ambassador in Sanaa, was today summoned to the Foreign Ministry.

Brother Ghalib 'Ali al-Jamil, Foreign Ministry under secretary for political affairs, informed the ambassador of the Yemeni Government's protest over the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish. He also told him that his country will be held responsible for all the repercussions and consequences of its flagrant aggression, which does not serve security and stability of the Red Sea. He also told him that such an aggression will only mar relations and harm the ties of good neighborliness between the two countries.

The brother under secretary stressed to the Eritrean ambassador that the Republic of Yemen, which (?urges) the Eritrean Government to resort to dialogue and peaceful ways to resolve disputes in accordance with international laws and agreements, reserves its legitimate right to defend its sovereignty over its territory and territorial waters.

The brother Foreign Ministry under secretary for political affairs (?met separately) with the heads of the diplomatic missions of the Security Council permanent member states, the Arab countries, and the EU member states to explain developments between Yemen and Eritrea. He stressed to them that Eritrea is fully responsible for the escalation of the crisis between the two countries.

'Large-Scale' Clash Doubted

NC1712213095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2000 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 17 Dec (MENA) — The Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the Hanish islands has once again been put in the limelight because of the strategic importance of 41 deserted Yemeni islands in the Red Sea. The importance of the islands first emerged after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

An informed Yemeni source told a MENA correspondent in Sanaa that all Red Sea littoral states and all international forces interested in this vital waterway are watching with interest the developments of the dispute between Yemen and Eritrea over the Hanish islands because they are located near the international navigation line. This line will be threatened if the dispute between the two countries escalates, the source said.

The source said it is unlikely for the dispute to develop into a large-scale military confrontation between the two countries. This is because of the [good] relations between Sanaa and Asmara and because both capitals know that the world powers interested in the safety and security of the Red Sea navigation will not remain silent on any threat to this vital waterway, the source added.

The source explained that the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the islands is an old one. He noted that the islands of Hanish al-Kabir, Hanish al-Saghir, and Zuqar are close to the Eritrean coast, and the Eritreans fear

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that these uninhabited islands might be used by some extremist groups as a staging point for operations against Eritrea, especially since these groups receive special support from the Sudanese regime.

The problem first emerged in 1991, when the Eritreans began impounding some Yemeni ships and fishermen. In the same year, Eritrea asked Yemen to determine the territorial waters of each country, but Yemen did not respond because it was preoccupied with the Gulf war.

Official Condemns 'Aggression'

JN1812072095 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in English 0633 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An official source in the Republic of Yemen has said Eritrean forces carried out an aggression on the greater Hanish island in the Red Sea, violating the country's sovereignty, regional waters, and threatening the safety of international maritime movement in the Red Sea.

The official said Eritrean authorities revealed their intentions for aggression through [words indistinct] the island, and despite government efforts to [words indistinct], the Eritrerans just went ahead and carried out their offensive despite a memorandum of understanding to continue talking on the [words indistinct] sea borders between the two countries.

The Republic of Yemen expressed regret at such an aggression, and strongly condemned it. Reserving the right to defend its waters, Yemen called on the Eritrean Government to bear the consequences of its aggression by removing all its [word indistinct] and resorting to dialogue to solve any differences as per international law.

Cease-Fire Said in Effect

NC1812091695 Paris AFP in English 0900 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 18 (AFP) — Yemeni and Eritrean forces on Monday [18 December] began observing a ceasefire after three days of fighting over a strategic Red Sea island, a source close to the Yemeni government said.

"The ceasefire took effect at midnight (2100 GMT Sunday) on the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir. It is being respected," the source told AFP.

The Yemeni government has been discussing the formation of a special committee to oversee the ceasefire, which is to include delegates from Yemen, Eritrea and the US military attaches based in each country, he said.

But a US embassy official in Sanaa said he "was unable to confirm" that two Americans were on the committee.

The Yemeni source said the Eritreans captured a bridgehead on the island, which covers around 90 square kilometers (36 square miles) and is 42 kilometers (26 miles) from the Yemeni coast. The Eritreans landed on Friday.

Eritrea announced overnight that it had concluded a ceasefire agreement with Yemen.

Sanaa and Asmara have disputed sovereignty over al-Hanish al-Kabir and two other islands, Lesser Hanish and Jabal Zuqar, which are strategic because they control access to the Bab al-Mandab straights between the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Official Hopes Talks Not Marred

JN1812100095 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0900 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Dammam, 18 Dec (WAKH) — Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, Yemeni deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has expressed hope that the attack launched by the Eritrean forces on greater Hanish island will not influence the meeting scheduled to be held between the two countries after the month of Ramadan.

In a statement to the Saudi newspaper AL-YAWM, al-Iryani said the meeting will work out a provisional solution to the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict on the Red Sea islands. Al-Iryani said he is waiting for clarifications from Sanaa on this matter.

A Yemeni Government official source said yesterday that Eritrean forces launched an aggression against the Yemeni greater Hanish island, whose sovereignty is disputed by Yemen and Eritrea.

Israeli Role Alleged

MM1812110395 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Dec 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Naji al-Harazi: "Sanaa Hints at Israeli Involvement; Fierce Fighting Between Yemen and Eritrea"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sanaa, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — The dispute between Yemen and Eritrea over the strategic Hanish islands in the Red Sea witnessed a serious development yesterday when an official spokesman announced that Eritrean military units launched an attack on Hanish al-Kabir island on Friday. Yemeni sources have confirmed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the clashes continued throughout the day yesterday, that a number of people from among Yemeni citizens and the military garrison there have been killed

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or wounded, and that the wounded have been taken to Sanaa military hospital.

The sources added that the defending Yemeni forces are confronting the Eritreans, who are trying to advance on the island, and that Yemeni units have intercepted "communications conducted in Hebrew among the attacking Eritrean forces — which prompts one to believe that they are using Israeli gunboats and Israeli guides." [passage omitted]

A Yemeni source has accused Eritrea of "recently receiving Israeli military aid in the form of speed boats, communication equipment, arms, and ammunition in return for promises to allow Israel to set up a military base on one of the Red Sea islands." [passage omitted]

Eritrea Issues Statement

NC1812120095 Paris AFP in English 1109 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 18 Dec (AFP) — Eritrea said Monday [18 December] it would release more than 180 Yemeni soldiers taken prisoner in battles over the weekend for the disputed Red Sea island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

The death toll in the fighting appeared to be at least nine soldiers, with Asmara acknowledging the loss of six men, with another three wounded, and sources in Sanaa close to the Yemeni Government saying its forces suffered three men killed and around 10 wounded.

In a statement made available to AFP as the two sides began observing a ceasefire, the Eritrean Foreign Ministry said the Asmara government had decided to release the Yemeni soldiers because it believed the dispute should be resolved 'through negotiations and international legality.'

The statement, which did not say when the prisoners would be released, said Eritrean forces had destroyed a Yemeni helicopter.

It said the Eritrean forces 'managed to thwart the provocation' of the Yemeni troops which carried out acts of 'harassment' on Friday and launched full-scale attacks on Eritrean positions before dawn on Saturday despite continuing negotiations on the island's status.

The Eritrean statement said Asmara had not embarked on any programmes on the islands since Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1993 because it was grappling with 'more pressing tasks' following its war of independence.

Yemen began to deploy troops to the islands at the beginning of November 'without any explanation or forewarning,' it said.

The Asmara government then dispatched a delegation to Sanaa on November 22 'to protest against this unnecessary provocation and to resolve the dispute through negotiations.'

'A further meeting was held in Asmara on December 7, with Eritrea proposing that the dispute be settled by the International Court of Justice, but the Yemeni delegation stalled the talks insisting that their mandate was to discuss sovereignty over the al-Hanish island and not the archipelago,' the Eritrean statement said.

A further meeting was scheduled for February, the statement said, but late Friday afternoon, 'units of the Yemen armed forces resorted to provocative acts of harassment and intimidation over Eritrean forces' stationed on Sayul al-Hanish, which is known as Mamalah in Arabic and is next to al-Hanish al-Kabir. 'Then early at 5:30 a.m. on Saturday morning, contingents of the Yemen armed forces launched land and air attacks on Eritrean positions on the island,' the statement said. 'Fighting continued the whole day on Sunday.'

The statement said that 'contemporary history attests that the al-Hanish archipelago ... has been part of Eritrea from the period of the Ottoman Empire through Italian, British and Ethiopian colonial occupations of the country.'

[Cairo MENA in Arabic at 1120 GMT on 18 December in a related report adds the following: "Informed sources in Sanaa put the Yemeni side's casualties in the Yemeni-Eritrean military operation since early Saturday [16 December] at six dead. Three Eritreans have been wounded. The Yemeni side lost a helicopter and 180 soldiers were taken prisoner, the sources added.

["The same sources noted that the Eritrean military units withdrew from Jazirat al-Hanish early this morning, taking the Yemeni prisoners with them.

["No official statement on the result of the operation has been released by the Yemeni side. The official media are confined to making general comments on the Eritrean aggression without reporting any details."]

Eritrea Captures Island

NC1812112195 Paris AFP in English 1119 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Dec 18 (AFP) — Eritrean forces have captured the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir in the Red Sea shipping lanes despite agreeing to a ceasefire, the official Yemeni news agency said.

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President Salih Receives U.S. Ambassador

JN1712211295 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih today received [name indistinct], U.S. ambassador to our country. They discussed several issues of interest to relations between the two friendly countries. The brother president asked the ambassador to convey a message to the U.S. Administration.

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Husayn Kamil's 'Salvation Council' Program

MM1512120895 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Dec 95 p 6

["Text" of the "Phased Program" of the Higher Council for the Salvation of Iraq, presented by General Husayn Kamil and reported by 'Imad al-Furayh in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq is our great country. It is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland. Iraq has been distinguished by its realistic ideology, the depth of its civilization, which is renowned as the most ancient civilization on the face of the Earth, and its huge economic resources. Hence it is the national duty of all its sons to ensure the continuation of this civilization, and to keep in touch with all thing oriental and to be receptive to all the modern things that exist in the world, interact with them, and understand the developments of the age and deal seriously with them, so that Iraq would not remain in a state of retrogression, isolation, and deterioration, out of touch with all the scientific, technical, and ideological developments that take place, and so that it becomes equipped to keep abreast of these human developments in these fields as well as in the fields of progress and the freedom, welfare, and basic rights of man.

It is a known fact that the conditions in our country are beset by backwardness, underdevelopment, isolation, and suffering, which makes it incumbent on us to work diligently to change its present conditions. This task can only be achieved by the efforts of its honorable sons who are free of all suspect objectives and who place the interests of their country above all other things — by all factions and sections of our heroic Armed Forces, who are renowned for their noble, glorious, and honorable history and whose role is acknowledged in the Arab and international arenas as well as by the sons of our people in the political parties and movements, by intellectuals, national personalities, and the various social sections of our dear homeland, to save it from the state it is now in, merge it with the modern world movement, and create and establish a true spirit of democratic freedom that gives man his full rights, unleashes his creative initiatives, and enables him to shoulder his responsibilities, assume his role in life, formulate and express his opinions, ensure his active and effective participation in building and development, and safeguard him from backwardness and loss.

The inevitable need to accomplish all this and restore Iraq's glory and its Arab and international position can only be achieved through diligence and true persistent work to change these conditions. For this reason Iraq's honorable and sincere sons march, relying and depending on God, along the road of sacrifice and struggle to save it. This is because the nature of the autocratic rule and the labyrinth into which it has driven Iraq by its irresponsible policies of internal suppression and its involvement in wars and what they have led to in terms of isolation in the Arab and international arenas — all these demand a bold position of struggle which rises to the level of historic events and responsibility.

Due to this fact and to their sense of responsibility, an elite group of the sons of the people have embarked — relying on God — on mobilizing their capabilities in a political formation that understands the current conditions of our country and realizes what is needed to bring about change and save our people from the ordeal and oppression they find themselves in, as well as asserting the need to safeguard the existence and unity of our country. This political entity has been named the "Higher Council for the Salvation of Iraq."

So that it can embark on the road of serious, scientific, and practical struggle, this Council must have basic principles that represent the broad lines of its basic ideological and political concepts and the general principles which crystallize their strategic norms, and a phased program which constitutes the general framework of the Council's actions in the current stage to bring about change, God willing, with firm determination.

The basic concepts, the general principles, and the phased program intertwine in an organic unity, acting as a guide on the road to phased historic and strategic action in all matters connected with the objective of saving our country Iraq on the one hand and drawing up the features of the future on the other hand, affirming and stressing at the same time that the new political system shall be a free, democratic, representative system based on political plurality and peaceful accession to power and on adherence to all the civil, political, economic, and social rights of citizens, with Islam being the official religion of the state and with sovereignty being vested in the people, who shall be the only source of legitimacy; there shall be no sway other than for the law and no authority shall be exercised except in accordance with the Constitution and the law, with all people being equal before the law and no single citizen or group of citizens having any authority or immunity or enjoying any special privileges that are confined to them alone or used to slight others. Furthermore, nationalism shall occupy a central place in the attitude and principle visions of the Council.

Its [the Council's] appreciation of the importance of this matter [nationalism], which affects Iraq's affiliation and existence, is due to the fact that Iraq's nationalist ori-

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entation has been marred by certain stigmas a result of the regime's erroneous policies and its loss of nationalist credibility, a fact which has led to the cracking of Arab solidarity and brought about nationalist losses the redressing of which requires the affirmation of a pure nationalist outlook, noninterference in internal affairs, and the realization of an inter-Arab reconciliation based on fraternity, solidarity, and work for the achievement of all that would realize Arab aspirations and respond to nationalist ambitions.

The Council's belief in Arabism is firm and unshakable and it will work to raise its prestige with actions to bolster the spirit of Arabism and meet its aspirations. With this Arab outlook, the Council does not divert its eyes from the legitimate nationalist rights of the other Iraqi citizens who belong to other races and religions (Kurds, Turkomans, Christians, and other minorities, religions, factions etc...). For this reason, the guide contains principled visions pertaining to political, national, nationalist, economic, and military issues as well as the issues of religion, women, and so on.

At the same time, the Council attaches prominence to law and the judiciary, due to their great importance, in a manner compatible with their role in life and in a form that responds to the expectations of the free Iraqi people in this sphere, which has suffered much due to the absence of the law or the weakness of its role in contemporary life and due to the judiciary's suffering and the disregard of its role. Out of its belief in the importance of the supremacy of the law, the Council's basic slogan affirms that Iraq belongs to all its sons and that the law and Constitution are above all.

An understanding of the Council's program in regard to all fields and issues can be achieved through the following: first, the Basic Concepts; second, the General Principles; and third, the Phased Program.

I. Basic Concepts

Numerous and varying regimes differing from one reign to another have ruled Iraq since the establishment of national rule. However, they all had one common factor, namely the absence of the rule of the Constitution and the weakness of the supremacy of the law. For this reason, autocracy dominated the country, whims played havoc with it, the people's will was ignored, and freedom, justice, and progress in our country became, most unfortunately, a prey to repression, oppression, and large-scale backwardness.

During all these regimes, the Iraqi people did not lead a life compatible with their heritage of civilization, their great history, and their wealth. This is because the successive regimes did not rise to the level of responsibility and true belief in the people. For this reason, all chance of achieving the desired development was lacking, and backwardness and retrogression permeated all fields, thus impeding our true march. This is in addition to Iraqi society's suffering from the heavy shackles of the regimes which were divorced from the required course. Thus the regimes stood in the trench of combating democracy, freedom, and justice, which were replaced by hostility to human rights and resistance to everything that could unleash the effectiveness and capabilities of the people and enable them to build, advance, and express their will and freedom through democratic institutions. The Constitution was in suspension and the law was frozen.

Most unfortunately, the regimes that have ruled over contemporary Iraq have expressed nothing but their own autocratic wills and kept away from the will of the people. They did not respect the rights, ambitions, and aspirations of the people, whose freedoms were suppressed. However, the regime that followed on 17 July 1968 added yet another method in addition to the above, by adopting the method of war as a means of resolving conflicts among states. This grave method has brought harm, ruination, and devastation to our country at the expense of progress, development, and welfare. One of the results of this oppressive method was the sad state of affairs the Iraqi people are living through today, which has brought upon them tribulations, catastrophes, and hardships. This state of affairs lays upon the shoulders of all sincere people who care for their homeland the task of saving it from this situation and opening the field widely to development and progress and the freedom of the individual. Historic vision, which monitors the deteriorating conditions throughout our dear country, makes it incumbent on us to rise to the level of responsibility and thus boldly unite our efforts to save Iraq, safeguard its sovereignty, unity, security, and independence, and avoid the feeble isolation, submission, and indifference to the unknown fate which threatens our country and without which we would have no destiny.

Change By All Means

Within the framework of this vision, we have found ourselves faced with the task of forming a political entity that would represent an active instrument of struggle for bringing about change and that would rely on serious, clean, and pure forces to save Iraq from autocratic rule and create a sound democratic alternative which would define by its objectives and organizational structure the future picture of the Iraq of desired hope.

The reason behind all this is that the national action is now entering a decisive stage which demands bold

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decisionmaking and positions and the determination of principles, strategies, and policies.

This diagnosis leads to the conclusion that as it concentrates the method of struggle on the principled base and the organizational norms, it ensures the Council's march toward the desired objectives, safeguards its movement against disbandment and loss, takes into consideration Iraq's particular conditions, the nature of its national structure, and its multitude of nationalities, religions, and creeds, derives benefit from the history of its national struggle and from the wealth of its heritage to formulate a true picture of the instrument of change, and assumes the task of saving and delivering Iraq from the state it is now in.

It is in the light of all the above that the Council has been formed. But it does not negate the other movements, bodies, and political parties and does not override their struggle and national role. Its role shall not be confined to the formulation of theories and the issuing of statements, but rather extends to all the methods of struggle needed to bring about the change of the autocratic regime and its replacement by a free democratic regime.

Thus the entity [the Council] springs from the common national womb and its labor of struggle, like the other true movements and parties that preceded it in serving our country Iraq. For this reason, the determination of the basic principles which clearly define the features of the future Iraq can be freely expressed in this regard through scientific analysis that can discern the objective conditions in Iraq, based on a true national position through a realistic and practical vision governed by principled balance and strategic visualization and absorbing its particular characteristics without sacrificing the national whole or oppressing a part of it.

Nothing threatens national action in a multiracial, multireligious, and multi-creed country so much as being out of touch with or ignoring the true, real conditions and acting outside the framework of its real conditions, disregarding its [the country's] particular characteristics, or being confined to a narrow group of blind cadres and becoming a prisoner of their limited sectarian rules. In view of this, finding a general national formula that could embrace the interests of all its sons cannot be achieved through a centralization that fails to take account of the special characteristics nor through the adoption of narrow concepts that confine the one-sided outlook to within its own closed walls. This [the adoption of a general formula] makes it possible to define the national option [that binds] between the Arabs, the Kurds, the Turkomans, the Christians, and the other minorities and religions.

This sound and healthy outlook can find a legitimate sphere for itself through complete agreement. By this, we mean the definition of the supreme national principles and their voluntary acceptance, and thus Iraq will truly belong to all its sons. The objective can be achieved through democracy and through a state of freedom, law, institutions, respect for human rights, establishment of rights of the various nationalities and minorities, abandonment of the use of force for resolving problems, avoidance of all forms of fanaticism and discrimination, and the affirmation of the legitimate rights of our citizens be they Arab, Kurdish, Turkomans, Christians, or any of the other minorities and religions that are there.

The Kurdish Question

As we define these issues, we must give the Kurdish question its due in line with our principled view of it and in a manner that safeguards the rights of the Iraqi Kurds in their homeland Iraq. The entire Iraqi people have suffered for a long time because of the failure to resolve the Kurdish question, and have paid a heavy price for this in terms of the dear blood of the sons of our homeland of all nationalities and religions. The lack of a solution has also had a negative effect on society's progress in the various economic, political, social, scientific, and military fields.

The sound attitude which we adopt for resolving this question is that which seeks to end it in a complete and right manner, ensure the consecration of all the legitimate rights, safeguard Iraq's unity, and end the harsh suffering endured by the Iraqi people as a result of negligence or indifference, through the resolution of the problems that arise and through preventing them from developing into conditions of tragedy and infighting, by settling disputes and by ensuring that our Kurdish people enjoy their rights and natural freedom without any diminution.

The multiplicity of nationalities is not something unique to Iraq. It is a characteristic of many countries and states. This objective fact should help us in laying the foundations for an Arab-Kurdish fraternity, based on national unity, as we can benefit from the experiences of others and their successful solutions in this regard. For this reason, we view the solution of the Kurdish problem seriously, confidently, and with full responsibility. We will not put forward a one-sided ready-made solution until we have completed the dialogue over it with our brother Kurds in a manner that affirms their identity and establishes their rights. This is why we have not given any details which might be misunderstood and have made a point of affirming the principled essence and the final solution of this question through the consecration

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of the rights of all Iraqis constitutionally and legally and first and foremost in the Iraqi national conscience.

By this responsible attitude toward the Kurdish question, we act in accordance with the supreme national interest. This affirms our commitment to democratic values and our concern to preserve them. Departure from freedom does not only lead to the unilateral assumption of power, domination of society, and denial of basic freedoms, but also leads to the spread of fear and the escalation of abominable discrimination among the various nationalities and religions and paves the way for divisive feuds and fanaticism, the distortion of values and ethics, and the endangering of Iraq's unity and independence.

Thus democracy is not only a political system on the basis of which the civilian society in Iraq can be founded, but it is also the necessity that closes doors to the defects that shake the foundations of the homeland and threaten the basis of citizenship. It is the solid ground for national fraternity and the bolstering of sincere affiliation for our Iraqi people.

Proceeding from this, all citizens are equal in terms of human and national values and personal dignity as well as in all their rights, freedoms, and public duties within the framework of public order, public ethics, and the rights and freedoms of others. Every Iraqi citizen has the right to freedom of thought, ideology, and opinion, freedom of expression, of worship and assembly, freedom of affiliation, residence, movement, and travel outside the homeland and return to it, freedom of exchanging letters and communication, and [privacy of] personal life within the sanctuary of his home, members of his family, his money, and his social relations.

Every Iraqi has the right to participate in political administration and in calling the rulers and agents to account and keeping watch on the entire state machine. The Iraqi citizen has the full right and duty to enjoy the protection of the law and to recognition as a person before the law, to a fair public trial, to the preservation of his citizenship which cannot be withdrawn from him except in accordance with the law, and to participation in civilian public and military service.

The Iraqi citizen has the right to work and to go on strike for the sake of protecting his legitimate interests in accordance with the law. He also has the right to equal pay for equal work, to organize and belong to trade unions, and to leisure and leave with full pay. The Iraqi citizen has the right to social security in times of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, and inability to earn because of circumstances beyond his control.

Every Iraqi citizen has right to the safety of his person and that of his family and the sanctity of his home, care for his children, health care, and appropriate medicine. He also has the right to conclude contracts of marriage and establish a family. All Iraqis have the right to education which is run by the state or individuals within the bounds of the law as well as to participation in all social and cultural manifestations of life.

So that democracy is safe from whims and moods and outside the sphere of intentional political manipulation and verbal trading and from theorizations and justifications that lead to the distortion of criteria or forgery and the slaughtering of freedom, the democracy in which the Council believes and from which it will not deviate is the democracy that endorses political, ideological, and cultural pluralism and believes in the right of others to have their opinions, respects parliamentary life, believes in the peaceful assumption of power and direct free elections, and accepts the results of elections based on voting to determine the rights of the majority while upholding the rights of the minority; which believes in the affirmation of the principle of separation of the three powers — the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary, and in the affirmation of the supremacy of the law and the independence of the judiciary; the democracy in which it (the Council) believes, guarantees the rights of all nationalities, religions, and factions to equality of rights and duties and bolsters their political freedoms and prosperity, without giving any preference, patronage, or supremacy to any faction above another.

Keeping the Army Free From Partisanship

In our view, democracy constitutes the utmost freedom of opinion and of opposing opinions, party pluralism, and freedom of the press — which, at the same time, the Constitution and the law shall organize so as to ensure that it [the press] does not go beyond all bounds and thus create anarchy and harm democracy in thought and method.

As it defines the national criteria, the Higher Council for the Salvation of Iraq considers it very important to explain its views regarding the position of the military establishment within the democratic system, so that the Army would not be embroiled in politics to serve personal whims and in an arbitrary manner as has happened in the case of bringing partisanship into the Army, which is a national institution that should be above political tendencies and partisan orientations and should confine its role to serving the homeland and the people and pledge loyalty to the country's Constitution.

The involvement of the Army in politics has introduced a serious precedent in Iraqi political life resulting in

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shaking political stability, exposing the unity of the Armed Forces to cracking, and depriving the Army of capable commanders and leaders, and has led to the suspension of democratic and representative life and the manipulation and coercion of the Army into undertaking ventures and entering wars and being used as a means of oppression against the people and for the liquidation of political rivals, contrary to the Constitution, civil rights, and the Army's basic duties.

Therefore, we see no reason for the politicization of the Armed Forces, as this conflicts with the basis of democracy and the purpose for which the Army was formed. Thus the natural position of the Army is inside its military barracks and its duties should be confined to the defense of borders, the land, and the country's integrity. It should not be used for resolving internal problems and feuds except in accordance with the Constitution and the law. Thus the democratic system should be safeguarded and protected from the dangers of trying to seize power by force of arms and from antidemocratic whims.

It is necessary to strike a balance between the size of the Army and the aforementioned issues, compatible with the interests of the homeland according to its circumstances and also with the Army's basic task as Iraq's strong shield that protects its borders and defends its sovereignty, thus ruling out the need for increasing the Army's size beyond the needs of the defense of the country and the demands of national requirements.

The Council finds it extremely important to affirm the development of the position of women, save them from social backwardness, equate them with men in rights and duties and in the occupation of public positions, enable them to exercise their role in life in a manner compatible with their particular conditions, and thus ensure that the country benefits from them, as they represent half of society. Thus society will be founded on an equal basis, contributing to the entrenchment of social justice and human equality and the development of the family without departure from the values of virtue and ethics.

Our view of religion in general and Islam in particular shall remain important, particularly because it constitutes a basic pillar in the life of our people. The Council finds no difficulty in this, for it is taken into consideration in our view as long as democratic methods are used [in applying Islam]. Our view of religious matters is determined through democratic principles.

The Higher Council respects religions and believes in the right of those who belong to them to perform their religious rites, and to enjoy respect for their feelings, places of worship, and customs.

The Council finds in Islam a blessed message which enriches life with its noble gracious values and spreads justice, virtue, fairness, honesty, and tolerance and fights evil, lies, robbery and hypocrisy. The Council considers the Islamic religion as the first source of legislation and good virtuous manners. It also affirms that it is the official religion of the state, while at the same time guaranteeing freedom of religion for all.

It [the Council] believes that respect for the religion of Islam is expressed in practical reality through respect for Islamic values and all Islamic doctrines and jurisprudence, avoiding sectarianism as a means of division. That calls for high vigilance and a distinction between the sect and sectarianism. The first represents a legitimate social entity while the other represents a rejected policy of factional fragmentation and disputes.... Sectarianism is not something exclusive to any particular sect because it is a manifestation of all fanaticism, disregard for the rights of other sects, and hostility toward their sanctities and rites. The Council attaches importance to the culture and information sector and it does so because of the bitter facts about that sector resulting from autocratic rule which seriously affected it. Culture has deteriorated and receded, with unfair restrictions imposed on intellectuals affecting the activity of that vital sector, causing it to lag behind and to be isolated from the cultural awakening and intellectual development in the world.

In view of that reality there was not sufficient scope for writing and excellence. The arts have also been subjected to repression and distortion. The Council believes that giving culture its proper place and ridding it of the shackles, pressures, and other such things as distortion and superficiality because of the tyranny of special ideologies and ideological rigidity, requires a greater atmosphere of cultural freedom and scope for excellence, enabling all intellectuals to shoulder their responsibilities without fear and on the basis of cultural pluralism and ideological and political diversity. The regime's monopoly of the media, geared to serve its policy on all levels, means that that reality should be overcome in the freedom state in harmony with democratic ideologies and the principle of freedom of thought and expression.

While stating these constant principles, the Council believes that the task of fulfilling them calls for emphasis on the importance of the education policy with a view to creating a scientific and educational renaissance in Iraq, confirming the value of science and scientists, showing regard for the universities and educational institutions, and laying down the foundations of technological progress in the country.

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It [the Council] does not overlook social stability. It stresses that social equilibrium requires a sound social policy which respects the individual, the family, and the general social structure and which defines the rights and duties of each one to the other in a way that guarantees health care and social security in a manner that ensures total safety for the public. Therefore, the security organs are not required to maintain security with an iron fist but rather to provide security and safety for the individual and society and also to maintain public order by discharging their duties under and in accordance with the law.

In the field of pan-Arab and international policy, it [the Council] proceeds from constant principles which make Iraq's sovereignty and the protection of its security, independence, national unity, and territorial integrity the central theme when determining Iraq's relations with the countries of the Arab nation in a manner which serves the higher pan-Arab interests and responds to the fulfillment of pan-Arab aspirations and hopes, with commitment to the Arab League charter, the Joint Defense Treaty, and everything that safeguards the pan-Arab future of the one nation. It also believes that a policy of good neighborliness with the Muslim neighbors Iran and Turkey is the positive way to strengthen the links of joint and mutual interests and also strengthen friendship, good neighborliness, and peaceful coexistence with them in a way that would consolidate regional stability and close the door to the intensification of problems, differences, and disputes, proceeding on the basis of similar treatment, noninterference in internal affairs, and respect for good neighborliness.

We also care about the Islamic world and everything that strengthens ties with its states, contributes to the progress of the Islamic peoples, serves their sacred causes and common interests, and strengthens the role of the organization of Islamic states.

On the international level, a policy of friendship and cooperation with other states is the sound way of serving mutual interests, strengthening world peace and security, upholding international charters and treaties, resorting to diplomatic negotiations to solve problems between states, and rejecting the policy of aggression, expansion, and use of force. It [the Council] affirms respect for the UN charter, international laws and traditions, and all concluded treaties and agreements. In view of the serious threats posed by weapons of mass destruction to the cause of world peace and security, the Council, being aware of its pan-Arab, regional, and international responsibilities, emphasizes its interest in destroying these weapons and in distancing itself from them, urging that the region should be free from them.

As it defines its national concepts through the main principles, it proceeds, on that basis, to crystallize the "general principles" which form the elements of its march to serve our country Iraq.

II. General Principles

Chapter 1: Name and Headquarters

Article 1: The name is "the Higher Council for the Salvation of Iraq." Iraqi territory is its headquarters and it may open offices in fraternal and friendly countries.

Chapter 2: National Sovereignty

Article 2: Iraq is a united independent state with full sovereignty over its land, water, and air as internationally recognized.

Article 3: Unity and territorial integrity of Iraq and unity of its people and political and administrative entity are a manifestation of its national sovereignty.

Article 4: The policy is an independent one detached from any subservience or blocs harmful to national interests and national independence.

Article 5: Full and permanent commitment to the independence of Iraqi decisionmaking.

Article 6: Insistence on the unity of the Iraqi state, people, territory, and entity and rejection of everything that weakens that unity and encourages national disunity, something which has no basis whatsoever in the national concept, history, reality, or national and pan-Arab interests.

Chapter 3: Political System

Article 7: Implementation of a pluralist, parliamentary, and democratic system.

Article 8: Peaceful rotation of power is the real expression of democracy.

Article 9: Free and direct elections are the democratic way of popular representation. The ballot is the scale which determines majority and victory.

Article 10: Respect for the opposing opinion dictates diversity of views and opinions and is necessary for political, ideological, and cultural pluralism.

Article 11: The minority should respect the majority and the latter should safeguard the rights of the minority and allow it to object and express opposing views.

Article 12: The freedom of partisan organizations, trade and professional unions, and benevolent and social societies as well as freedom of the press, freedom of

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expression, and the right to demonstrate and strike are to be guaranteed.

Article 13: Application of the principle of separation of the three powers — the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary.

Chapter 4: The National Question

Article 14: Arab-Kurdish brotherhood is the basis of national unity and the pillar of stability and prosperity in Iraq.

Article 15: Final and appropriate radical solutions should be found for the Kurdish question. Dialogue with the Kurdish brothers is the basis for finding a final formula to confirm their rights in their country Iraq and ensure permanent stability in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Article 16: All nationalities in Iraq are equal in rights and duties and there is no discrimination, preference, or trusteeship by one over another under any pretext or excuse.

Article 17: Recognition of the legitimate rights of the Turkomans, the Christian sects, and all other minorities in a manner that would consolidate and safeguard national unity.

Article 18: Every national has a right to citizenship. Citizenship cannot be withdrawn from any citizen except in accordance with the law. An Iraqi who has acquired another citizenship has a right to reclaim his citizenship under the law.

Chapter 5: The Economic Question

Article 19: The market economy is considered the main basis of the economic system and economic policy.

Article 20: Support for private activities and individual initiatives.

Article 21: Recognition of state control of the major national sources of wealth such as oil and the like.

Article 22: Trade is free and the financial policy runs in line with the requirements of a free economy. The currency is to be floated in stages to determine an exchange rate for foreign currencies.

Article 23: Support for the agricultural sector in accordance with the requirements of agricultural progress. Application of practical methods in agriculture and use of modern methods of production, storage, distribution, land reclamation, and irrigation and drainage.

Article 24: Private ownership is a fundamental right which cannot be restricted except in the general interest and within fair limits. Inheritance is an absolute right. Individual initiatives make the economy. The state will run the public utilities and initiate projects which individuals cannot undertake or which are required in the general interest without prejudice to the basic rights and liberties of citizens.

Article 25: The state will ensure just distribution of the national income among citizens.

Chapter 6. The Social And Educational Question

Article 26: The social structure is to be consolidated through the consolidation and protection of the family, considering the individual as the basis of the general social structure.

Article 27: Enhancement of the position of women and giving them equality with men in a way that does not run contrary to social values. Rejection of the view that does not respect women's humanity and keeps them on the margin of society.

Article 28: Care for mothers and children and introduction of social security against unemployment, old age, illness, and so on.

Article 29: Implementation of an education policy that guarantees education for all, creates a conscious generation, strengthens the status of science and scientists, protects the independence of the university, and encourages scientific research leading to scientific progress.

Article 30: Every human being is entitled to education and that will be compulsory through the fundamental stage, and the state should provide education for all in the subsequent stages including technical and vocational training. Education will be free of charge at all stages in government schools, institutes, and universities. The private sector has a right to have its own schools and universities in accordance with the law.

Article 31: A health policy will be introduced guaranteeing treatment and medicines for the public and enhancing health awareness and services.

Article 32: Care and welfare for students and the young in line with the hopes attached to them.

Article 33: Every human being is entitled to an appropriate standard of living that meets his and his family's basic needs, especially food, clothing, and housing.

Chapter 7: The Religious Question

Article 34: Islam is the official religion of the state.
Article 35: Freedom of religion is guaranteed for all.
Article 36: Performance of religious customs and rites is a guaranteed right for all religions, faiths, and sects.
Article 37: Sects are legitimate but sectarianism is forbidden.

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Chapter 8: Law and Justice

Article 38: The rule of law is the basis of the political, social, economic, and psychological stability of society.

Article 39: The law is above everyone, and all Iraqis are equal before the law.

Article 40: The judiciary is independent and nobody has power over it. The courts are the elements of justice and litigation and should uphold right and justice.

Article 41: The standing of judges should be enhanced and their mission respected.

Article 42: The right to life is protected under the law. Capital punishment should only be used against the most serious crimes. Death sentences for political crimes are not allowed unless murder or attempted murder is involved. Only a judicial court can issue death sentences, and the convicted have a right to seek amnesty or commutation of the sentence.

Article 43: Every crime and every punishment must be defined. Prisoners will be treated humanely and their dignity respected. It is not permitted to imprison a person who has failed to honor a civilian commitment.

Article 44: Formation of special courts outside the judicial body is not allowed.

Article 45: Confiscation of movable or immovable property for political reasons is not allowed.

Article 46: Confiscation of individual homes is not allowed for any reason.

Article 47: Individual punishment does not apply to relatives in any degree under divine and temporal laws.

Article 48: Movable and immovable property confiscated for political reasons and outside the framework of the law will be returned to its owners.

Chapter 9: The Army and Armed Forces

Article 49: The Army is the homeland's shield defending the borders against foreign aggression, protecting the country's independence, and safeguarding the country's Constitution.

Article 50: The Army and all the Armed Forces are forces of the people and the homeland, and their loyalty is to the Constitution.

Article 51: The Army and all the Armed Forces are above political and partisan tendencies. The principle prohibiting involvement of the military in politics or membership of political parties or blocs while in military service will apply.

Article 52: The security organs operate under the law, not above the law. They are there to serve the people, not to repress and persecute them.

Chapter 10: Culture and Information

Article 53: There should be freedom for culture, art, the press, and all forms of creativity without government control.

Article 54: The culture and arts departments are there to serve the people and their development.

Article 55: There should be interest in heritage and openness to the world's cultural development and renewal.

Article 56: Writing and creativity should be encouraged in fulfillment of the aims of the cultural movement and in line with the concepts of freedom and democracy.

Article 57: Freedom of opinion and expression should be guaranteed and the right of writing protected.

Chapter 11: Pan-Arab Policy

Article 58: Iraq is an integral part of the Arab nation.

Article 59: The aim is to strengthen relations with the fraternal Arab countries, serve Arab interests, and work for everything that fulfills pan-Arab aspirations and enhances the common fate.

Article 60: Noninterference in internal affairs.

Article 61: Commitment to the Arab League charter, the Joint Defense Treaty, and the Arab summit resolutions.

Chapter 12: Foreign Policy

Article 62: Consolidation of neighborly links with the states which have common borders with Iraq, and enhancement of [mutual] interests to cement regional security.

Article 63: Development of friendly relations with the states of the world, enlargement of the circle of mutual interests with them, protection of world peace and security, and commitment to international law and to the UN charter.

Article 64: Rejection of the policy of aggression and expansion, no recourse to force for the settlement of disputes with other states, and seeing diplomatic and political efforts as the main way of settling differences and problems with other countries.

Article 65: Iraq will dissociate itself from the production of weapons of mass destruction and call on the states of the region to apply the same principle.

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Chapter 13: The Higher Council's Motto

Article 66: Iraq belongs to all its people and the Constitution and the law are above everyone.

III. The Phased Program

The main purpose of the emergence [of the Council] is participation in saving Iraq from ordeals caused by autocratic rule and the policy based on terrorism and ignition of wars, and then in the creation of a free democratic regime.

The achievement of that objective calls for an analysis of the current phase in relation to the nature of the current regime in Iraq and the current international reality. The current phase exposes the dilemma of totalitarian regimes and the stifling crisis for the world's dictatorships after the collapse of the communist regimes and the mounting popular quests for freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights.

That fact confirms the inevitability of the collapse of despotic regimes which rely on terrorism and fear in their management of the state and society. It also confirms that it is the democratic alternative which upholds the values of freedom and the democratic rules of political pluralism, parliamentary life, and the state of institutions, constitution, and law. The stage after the Cold War and the collapse of the communist camp faced mankind with a different situation. That fact should be taken into consideration and movement at the international level should be in that light.

Therefore, and in the light of that reality, the realistic and scientific concept is one which avoids two erroneous trends. The first is the tendency toward adventurism and the second is capitulation. By adventurism we mean seeing the national will as something in confrontation with this [new] situation, its concepts, and its rules. Capitulation in this case means ignoring the capabilities and intrinsic characteristics of the national will and opting for a subservient role in the international situation away from national interests.

So the sound approach is to avoid these two tendencies and take a position based on a legitimate balance which understands the laws of the era and adheres to national interests.

Defining the position in the light of all that is the first part of the desired equation for change. Analyzing the nature of the current regime in Iraq and its crisis constitutes the second part of that equation.

The dictatorial nature of the regime is manifest in its monopoly of power and government, its ban on the activities of parties, trade unions, and professional unions not linked to the regime, its control of the sources of wealth and power placing the national economy at the service of the regime and using the Army and security organs for the same purpose, its monopoly of the media, and its ban on freedom of expression, demonstrations, and strikes through control of the media, culture, and education in order to be able to politically and intellectually mislead and instill the wrong concepts and glorify dictatorship.

The legal system has also been the target of distortion and forgery to introduce legal rules giving dictatorship a free hand and acting as a terrorist sword over the heads of the people. The regime did not hesitate to give legality to every order issued by the "Revolution Command Council." That upset the legal balance and the legal scales leading to legal instability, absence of justice, and absence of judicial scales. And that has shaken the social structure and undermined judicial performance and the position of the judges, and it also weakened the courts and prejudiced the integrity of justice.

The aim was not only to destroy the foundations and structure of the civilian society in Iraq but also to create a political vacuum and enable one party to run the state and repress the public. So, a scientific analysis of these matters and phenomena exposes the fact that the regime has moved toward autocratic rule to replace the party rule which was used to serve the ruler and spread racism and sectarianism in the country.

This analysis enables us to identify the main weak point in the dictatorial nature of concentrating all the power in the hands of the head of the regime, and what that means to others in terms of fear which paralyzes work and kills opinion and initiative at a time when [other] totalitarian regimes have collapsed and their ideologies reached a dead end.

That point became very clear after the entry into the arena of wars, and in the current phase it has become an axiom needing no proof. The policy of wars intensified the regime's crisis. Surely, analysis of the other points of weakness also covers the collapsing economic situation, the deteriorating security situation, the spread of corruption, bribery, and crime, the erosion of the state's prestige, and the weakness of the official institutions. That is what emerges now, as the gap between the people and the regime increases, as the people's resentment of the regime mounts, and as numerous attempts are made to get rid of it.

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Peres, Warren Christopher Hold News Conference

TA1612194095 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1803 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Joint news conference by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Prime Minister Shim'on Peres at the Laromme Hotel in Jerusalem; italicized passages in English — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Peres] *I would like to thank the secretary of state for his untiring efforts to reopen the negotiations between Syria and ourselves. I would like also to thank the President of the United States, who took a personal interest in doing so and the team of peace [words indistinct], but I would leave the major announcement to the secretary himself. We reached an agreement: The secretary will say the right things, and I shall try to answer the difficult questions in the wrong way. Mr. Secretary, please.* [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen] Did you receive from Syria the clarifications you sought with regard to Syria's perception of the peace with Israel? Does the resumption of the negotiations next week mean that you will already begin to discuss the demarcation of the border next week and that you will be able to announce Syria's sovereignty on the Golan?

[Peres] We received their agreement that the negotiations will be flexible, open, and not rigid. Each side will be able to raise whatever it wants. There is no commitment — either on our part or theirs — to make any declaration whatsoever in the first meeting. I think this is the first time that the tone of our exchanges is reasonable. I personally believe this is a great opportunity to put an end to wars in the Middle East.

I also believe that the negotiations include two parts, one of them being the bargaining — that is, the disagreements between Syria and us, to which we will have to find an apt answer. At the same time, there are real problems which will require the cooperation of both sides in order to solve them. We are approaching the issue with openness, without rigidity or preconditions, and with each side being free to raise whatever it thinks is necessary in order to attain full peace.

[Shlomi Eldar of Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1] Mr. Prime Minister, you recently stated that peace with Syria could be attained within one to three years. Are you more optimistic in the wake of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's current mission? What will it take to raise the level of the talks, perhaps to the level of a Camp David-like summit?

[Peres] I believe the very resumption of the talks in such an open fashion and within such a short period of time is a good sign. I am not playing down the difficulties both sides will have along the way, which is only natural. The truth is that there are real problems, but I hope the negotiations will be conducted in a fair manner, with each side taking into consideration the needs of the other side.

[Eldar] Was anything said about raising the level of the talks in the future?

[Peres] I have nothing to announce at the moment. I did not pose any preconditions whatsoever. I think that would be a good development, but it is not a precondition.

[Unidentified correspondent] *Mr. Prime Minister, forgive me if this question has been asked and answered in Hebrew. In any decision on the disposition of the Golan Heights, do you intend to be bound by the results of a referendum and, if so, does President al-Asad know that?*

[Peres] *The late Prime Minister Rabin said that there will be a referendum if there will be a need to retreat from the whole of the Golan Heights, and I shall respect his position.*

[Correspondent] *Mr. Prime Minister, this has been put on a very fast track. How quickly do you think there could be an agreement? We haven't heard too much lately about the Israeli Jews who went up to the Golan Heights to live; some people call them settlers. What are you going to do about them?*

[Peres] *I don't think that this is the proper time right now to start to deal with that issue. I think right now what we have to do is to really build a basis of trust and understanding between Syria and ourselves and, may I say, I am encouraged by the response of President al-Asad to Secretary of State Mr. Christopher upon his visit to Syria. It's a new game, it's a new tone, it's a new beginning, and I think we shall have to carry on together.*

[Correspondent] *And how quick could you get the agreement?*

[Peres] *I mean, as fast as we can, but I cannot give you any dates.*

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, will the new tone and proposals be coupled with a new agenda, or will you pick the talks up where you left off — that is, Clause No. 5 of the old agenda?

[Peres] My answer is that any negotiations that do not entail innovations die of boredom. Anyone who tries to compile the old statements and build an agreement based on them will have a hard time. I believe the two sides will have to introduce new ideas and a new approach. I would also like to tell you very frankly: I

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am very pleased that the United States is part of the process. I believe its contribution will be a real one, and I am also very glad that both the Syrians and we believe that the United States has an important role to play here, which both sides will presumably respect.

[Correspondent] *Mr. Prime Minister, two questions on specifics: First of all, how will your approach this time vary from negotiations in the past and does it relate to your emphasis on comprehensive talks? And, secondly, are you really any closer on the fundamental points that have divided you in the past in significant ways or meaningful ways?*

[Peres] *Well, I think that we have tried one track. It reached its problems. Now we are trying a different track and a different approach. I believe, hopefully — I believe that's true for the two sides — to overcome the initial complications we encountered at the beginning of the negotiations. This is a reopening of the avenue of negotiations which we welcome very much. Now, I can't give you a date. I do believe that peace in the Middle East is inevitable. I think all of us need it equally. I know there are contradictions and there are disputes and there are difficulties. It may take time, but the great statement, I believe, that Secretary of State Christopher did was to announce that there is a new will, there is a different approach, and I welcome it.*

[Shlomo Raz, Qol Yisra'el's political correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, you stated recently that you would announce — probably in the Knesset — the price that Israel will have to pay for this peace. Have you set a date for it? Do you plan to deliver this special announcement to the Knesset within the next few days?

[Peres] Why are you so impatient? When the time comes, we will come to the Knesset. I chose to announce Israel's contribution to the peace process in our own home, which is only natural. I said as much to President Clinton, and he replied that he thinks this is the right approach.

[Raz] Has that time not yet come or been determined?

[Peres] That time has not yet come. We are only just now getting started on the negotiations.

[Correspondent] Sir, should we also expect an imminent resumption of the talks with Lebanon? And another question: Who will be heading the Israeli team on 27 December?

[Peres] The negotiations with Syria include a Lebanese section. I suppose the talks with Syria will also deal with the Lebanese issue. As for the makeup of the team and who will head it, we will announce it in the next few days. [passage omitted with question to Secretary Christopher and his response]

[Correspondent] *I have a question for the prime minister and for the secretary: Mr. Prime Minister, the settlers on the Golan say that even if you do negotiate and achieve a peace with Syria that involves a withdrawal from the Golan, they vow to defeat you politically. Do you think you can [words indistinct] with Israel?*

[Peres] *I think it is their right to defeat me politically, but I think it's my opportunity to convince the people. That's democracy.*

Peres: No Documents Given To Syria on Withdrawal

TA1812123495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says Israel has not submitted any document to Syria or the United States. He said: We are dealing with procedural understandings between Israel and Syria only, which were relayed by the United States. Peres addressed the Labor faction a short time ago. Yo'el Nir reports:

[Begin recording] [Nir] The prime minister was seeking to refute recent rumors and reports. He listed 10 points of understanding that we have reached with Syria. These points principally include nothing new and most of them have already been publicized. Peres denies having relayed a document to Syria or having given any territorial commitment. He says, however, that the time restriction does not mean we have to reach a bad agreement. If we can manage it, we will make a good agreement, even in the short time we have:

[Peres] Let me say that if we are really serious about what we want to achieve, then we have an opportunity here. We have 10 months until the elections, and this is not much time. We shall see what we can accomplish in these 10 months. This short period of time, however, does not mean we will settle for a bad agreement. If it is possible to reach a good agreement in a short period I do not regard it as a disadvantage. If we can accomplish this all the better, but if not, then we shall continue the negotiations after the elections.

I am not denying or trying to ignore the difficulties along the way; we both have serious difficulties. There are many problems that will require creative solutions, just as we have done in previous negotiations. This is the lesson we learned from previous negotiations which have ended in a satisfactory manner. Nobody disputes the Gaza agreement, and I believe that a national consensus is also being formed concerning the

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agreement in Judaea and Samaria. The polls indicate that some 70 percent support it — and we should recall that we started out with less than 50 percent support. In this case, too, we must convince the people who support us that we are not waging a partisan war, but struggling for peace. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Lists 10 Points of Understanding

TA1812161795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has outlined a 10-point plan for the peace negotiations with Syria, and he has made it clear that Israel made no prior commitment to give up territory. This report from David Ze'ev:

[Begin recording] [Ze'ev] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres appeared before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and the Labor Party parliamentary group. A source in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee quoted him as saying: No document has been given to the Syrians in advance of next week's negotiations; no territorial obligation has been made; no map has been handed over; and then, he says, no written document has been authorized.

This was the prime minister's response to a reporter's question on whether he was ready to speed up a Golan withdrawal as part of an agreement with Syria:

[Peres] We have agreed to speed up the negotiations, to make them open, without prior conditions. More than that I cannot say, because we didn't start to negotiate.

[Ze'ev] In the Labor meeting open to the media, Peres listed what he said were 10 points of understanding between Israel and the United States and — so I believe, the prime minister said — with the acceptance of Syria as well.

1. No preconditions; instead, the two sides will each present ideas at the negotiations.

2. The objective is more important than how the talks are carried out. The premier said Israel would have liked to open the negotiations with a summit between him and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, but that is not a condition.

3. The better the negotiations proceed, the faster there will be results.

4. A division between points of contention, including where the future border will be, and issues which have to be resolved, such as security arrangements and water.

5. Negotiations on all issues simultaneously. In this regard Peres said he and then Prime Minister Rabin had agreed, as had the army, that the talks had to go beyond just security arrangements.

6. A Syrian-Israeli agreement creates the opportunity for an end to all wars in the region.

7. To seek ways to transform the Golan Heights from a place of military confrontation to a center of economic cooperation.

8. That the United States plays a central role.

9. To preserve quiet on the Lebanese border.

10. That the negotiations be less formal, more practical, and at a pace as fast as possible. [end recording]

Government Prepares Draft Treaty With Syria

TA1812092595 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 18 Dec 95 p A1

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A draft peace treaty between Israel and Syria has been prepared at the Foreign Ministry. The document has still not been submitted for approval by the political echelon, but political sources believe that if detailed negotiations commence it will be presented to Syria as a basis for discussions. The draft treaty, which has been termed a "contingency plan," was prepared when Shim'on Peres was foreign minister, and has been rewritten several times over the past few months.

This week the Israeli delegation to talks with Syria will hold a series of preparatory discussions in anticipation of the opening of the talks next Wednesday [27 December]. The talks will be directed by Uri Savir, coordinator of the political negotiations, and will also include Major Generals 'Uzi Dayan and Dani Yatom, Foreign Ministry Legal Adviser Yo'el Zinger, and Finance Ministry Director General David Brodet.

Political sources told HA'ARETZ that the delegation possesses detailed position papers on all components of the arrangement with Syria. The documents also broach the issue of economic cooperation, including proposals for bilateral ties and for the involvement of Syria in regional development projects.

The Israeli positions on the security sphere were prepared by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Planning Branch after the officers talks were suspended. A security source noted that "Israel is ready to resume the security talks at any time."

Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has proposed shortening the duration of Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights from what Yitzhaq Rabin had demanded. In his

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visit in Washington last week, Peres told U.S. President Bill Clinton that "he was less concerned by the time factor" and does not necessarily regard the withdrawal stages the same way that Rabin regarded them.

The late prime minister publicly stated that the withdrawal must be carried out over a period of three years and nine months. During the first stage there would be a "minimal withdrawal" to include the uprooting of one settlement and evacuation of the Druze villages on the northern part of the Golan Heights, while at the same time full diplomatic relations are to be established and embassies opened. Rabin's proposal stipulated that after that stage the normalization would be tested for a period of three years, until the withdrawal to the final border line.

Peres also presented Clinton with ideas for solving the water problems between the two countries, based on creating new water resources rather than dividing up the existing water supplies. "The problem is not how to divide up the little that we have, but how to create more," the prime minister said. As an example he noted the possibility of desalinating water with nuclear reactors and importing water from Turkey. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0700 GMT on 18 December adds: "Professor Moshe Braver of Tel Aviv University's Geography Department says that for many months experts have been discussing the demarcation of the border with Syria. He says that the best scientific forces in the spheres of geography and hydrology have been recruited for this mission in order to prevent the mistake made during the negotiations with Egypt, which resulted in the handing over of Taba to the Egyptians. Prof. Braver made these remarks to Qol Yisra'el this morning."]

Weizman Warns Against 'High Expectations'

TA1712115395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Secretary of State Warren Christopher has concluded his visit to Israel and left for Cairo. [passage omitted]

After meeting with Secretary of State Christopher this morning, President 'Ezer Weizman said that while there was room for hope in the talks, we must remain on the alert and be careful not to entertain overly high expectations.

Foreign Ministry sources believe that the Americans will finance the cost of hosting the talks in the Washington area next week. The sources noted that the Camp David talks were also financed by the Americans. This was reported by our correspondent Pe'erli Shahar.

Speculation on Tel Aviv's Opening Position in Talks

TA1612202795 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1816 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Studio talk between political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen and moderator Gay Zohar — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Rosen] The prime minister is currently answering another question about the new flexibility evinced by the Syrians. It should be pointed out that at the reception held prior to this news conference, Secretary of State Christopher told Israeli Cabinet ministers: I heard al-Asad in Damascus yesterday, and I must say that I have never heard him speak as he did since I started my shuttle missions in the Middle East.

It should be asserted very clearly that perhaps not on 27 December but in early January, near Washington, Israel and Syria will spread out maps and begin to demarcate the borderline. Israel's opening position will definitely be an agreement to withdraw to the international border, with a declaration recognizing Syria's sovereignty on the Golan following shortly afterward. This definitely will be the basis of the deliberations that will be held near Washington in early January, after the procedures and the teams are decided.

[Zohar] Did you hear that from Shim'on Peres? Did he speak about his willingness to recognize the international border in the talks proper?

[Rosen] I think this should come as no surprise. For a long time, Shim'on Peres has been speaking about the fact that the Golan is Syrian land. He has stressed that as soon as he gets clarifications from the Syrians about what they have in mind, he will publicly declare the price of the peace in the Knesset.

Peres thinks that the error committed in the negotiations to date is that they were conducted in the air, without knowing what they were talking about. Such negotiations cannot be conducted without knowing which borderline is at stake, and this is what will be done in the negotiations from now on.

Iraq-Syria Border Deal To Be Raised at Talks

TA1712195395 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reports reaching Jerusalem in the last few days, a border agreement has been signed between Syria and Iraq. In the agreement,

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Syria acknowledges for the first time its international border with Iraq and is prepared to agree to an arrangement whereby land is leased from Iraq. Israeli negotiators will raise that fact when the Syrians bring up their demand for an Israeli withdrawal to the June 1967 border.

Editorial on U.S. Role as International Arbiter

TA1812110895 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (HAYOM supplement) in Hebrew 18 Dec 95 p 3

[Editorial: "Pax Americana"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the face of it, Hafiz al-Asad has made a big concession when he agreed to launch practical negotiations with Israel without Shim'on Peres publicly and officially announcing in advance Israel's willingness to implement a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. In fact, however, Israel is the party that made the great concession when its prime minister promised al-Asad, via Secretary of State Warren Christopher, that Israel will announce its willingness to withdraw to the international border immediately after the talks are resumed. Al-Asad was told, however, that Peres' commitment is conditional on the Israeli voters' approval.

On the face of it, this constitutes progress in the Israeli-Syrian dialogue, which has so far resembled a dialogue between the deaf. In fact, however, this is the beginning of a three-way dialogue in which the Americans will have a central role. The Americans move from one international conflict to the next like a landlord settling conflicts between rival tenants, encouraging the parties to forge a dialogue, making promises to one party while twisting the arm of the other until they agree to sit down and sign the papers handed to them by the Americans. This is also what the Israeli Government can expect.

Syria Said Moved by 'Concessions,' U.S. 'Gestures'

TA1712112295 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 17 Dec 95 pp 1, 2

[Commentary by Ron Ben-Yishay: "What Really Made al-Asad Move"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The fog is still thick, and everyone involved is trying to make it even thicker to frustrate any attempts at torpedoing. Judging from the little that is known, we are at the beginning of another attempt to reach a joint U.S.-Syrian-Israeli declaration of principles that will loosely outline the principles of a peace accord between Israel and Syria, and will describe the procedure and framework under which the details will be worked out. If a declaration is drafted that the parties accept, it will receive an official seal of approval when U.S. Vice President Al Gore visits the Middle East in mid-January 1996, and in official declarations by the leaders of Israel and Syria. It will later serve as the infrastructure for practical negotiations that will start in February and be conducted by committees on specific issues.

It appears that a draft document of principles was agreed on during the Peres-Clinton meeting in Washington last week, and that al-Asad approved it conditionally when Christopher presented it to him as a U.S. bridging document over the weekend. American, Syrian, and Israeli teams will attempt to reach a final draft in a "mini Camp David" that will start in about 10 days at a site near Washington, but far from the media.

What does the U.S. bridging offer contain that made al-Asad (and Israel) get off the fence?

It is not quite clear yet. It seems to include a series of Israeli concessions — not really substantive ones — and American gestures that will allow the Syrian president to present his people with something of an achievement. First, Israel waived its demand that Syria keep its commitment to hold officers' talks on Golan Heights security arrangements. It also agreed that the entire range of issues be discussed simultaneously. Among other things, Israel agreed to drop its basic demand, which has been guiding it since the Madrid conference, and is now willing to discuss the permanent borders on the Golan even before it has been made clear just how far Syria is willing to go in normalizing relations and security arrangements. These two issues will be discussed in parallel — this is one concession.

But the real icing on the U.S.-Israeli cake presented to al-Asad is Israel's willingness to have its prime minister publicly announce that it recognizes Syrian sovereignty in (or on) the Golan [bagolan (or 'al hagolan)]. The announcement will neither state nor hint how far Israel would be willing to withdraw on the Golan [bagolan] but, as far as the Syrian president is concerned, the fact that such a statement is part of the joint document of principles is considered a giant achievement. He has been demanding for years that an Israeli prime minister make such an announcement, and now there seems to be an Israel willingness to meet him half way. It is reasonable to assume that Peres will announce Israel's recognition of Syrian sovereignty when he presents the document of principles to the Knesset, after it is finalized.

And what is al-Asad giving in return? So far, not much, except for agreeing to resume the talks and making several offers pertaining to more flexible procedures. He still adheres to his demand that Israel withdraw to the borders of 4 June 1967. It is also very probable that he agreed to say, publicly and openly — and be a

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little more specific than to date — what he is talking about when he speaks of "full peace relations" with Israel. It seems that he made another concession when he promised Christopher that Hizballah will be curbed for the duration of the negotiations.

And what will the Americans give?

Washington gave Syria something it had wanted for a long time: The direct involvement of the highest U.S. political echelons in the negotiations. Al-Asad needs to score enormous prestige in his country before he can make significant moves. He does not want to appear to be someone whose positions were made flexible by Dennis Ross. He will make personal gestures to Clinton and Gore, so that he can later collect the price from them. Besides, the shadow of the late Egyptian president accompanies him wherever he goes: Al- Sadat's partner in the peace process was President Carter; why should al-Asad not have his share?

Hence, there is no breakthrough yet, but there is a chance. If indeed a declaration of principles is attained in the coming weeks, the detailed negotiations will be easier and more practical than in the past.

Officials, Individuals React to Resumption of Talks

Foreign Minister Baraq Interviewed

TA1612212795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1822 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Interview with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by political correspondent Shlomo Raz at the Laromme Hotel in Jerusalem — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Raz] What did we actually learn from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's announcement on the resumption of the talks with Syria? Is it a technical phase pointing only to a resumption of the talks after a deep freeze or are we actually getting into matters of substance?

[Baraq] We are resuming the dialogue in a very open and flexible manner, after both sides expressed their willingness to try to be creative and to give their delegates to the negotiations a broad mandate so that they may discuss, in a less formal and structured manner than before, how to approach the negotiations, how to resume them, and how to tackle the broad array of issues that we, the Americans, and the Syrians will be putting on the agenda.

[Raz] The prime minister said a few days ago that the negotiations will take one to three years before peace is attained. Are you prepared to be more daring and set a shorter timetable?

[Baraq] I think timetables cannot be set. By nature, such issues require a counterpart. We will not know for certain until we have ascertained what the other side thinks. What is important in the negotiations is not how long they take but the extent to which the result reflects the openness of each side to the other's problems, as well as the insistence of the sides — of course, as far as we are concerned, our side is more important — on their vital interests. If the Syrians are definitely prepared to engage in open and comprehensive deliberations on all the issues that came up in the talks in recent days — we had a very interesting conversation with the Americans on this issue last night — I think we are embarking on an interesting route.

On the other hand, no assessment can be made at this point. The negotiations may drag on for a long time. The problems are not and have never been simple. We really intend to discuss them seriously.

[Raz] You say you had a very interesting conversation with the Americans yesterday. What did you discuss?

[Baraq] They conveyed their impressions about the talks with the Syrians and the Syrian reaction to the points raised by the prime minister in his meeting with the U.S. President. We discussed with them what all this means and what potential it has. Of course, it would be wrong on my part to divulge the details. They will be the topic of the negotiations, perhaps not in the first three days but probably in the following three days of talks at the beginning of 1996.

[Raz] What has actually changed? You actually met in the past with Chief of Staff al-Shihabi, and the talks were resumed but were suspended several times and entered a stalemate. What has changed to instill you with optimism that we are now talking about a whole new ball game?

[Baraq] Over a year ago, I had the opportunity to sit for many hours with Walid al-Mu'allim over a period of two days. A few weeks later, I met with him once again and with al-Shihabi at Blair House. I had the opportunity to see al-Shar' close up, sitting across the table from me during a dinner. I think that until now there was no willingness on the other side and there was a perception of unwillingness on our part. You cannot get into your rival's head in such matters, but their feeling was that there was really no broad mandate on our part and, consequently, they did not give a broad mandate to their people. I think the most important point here is the willingness of both sides to approach the negotiations in a creative and flexible manner — I am stressing these two adjectives because they came up in al-Asad's reaction and not just in Peres' initiative — and give a broad mandate to the delegates. A place where Dennis

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Ross, Mark Parris, Walid al-Mu'allim, and maybe some other Syrian will sit with Uri Savir, Itamar Rabinovich, and maybe some other Israeli delegate is a place with a chance for stimulating thinking, which I believe is very important. I know all these people. They are serious people, and this provides a chance to check the possibilities. We do not know what will come out of it or how long it will take. We will have to uphold our vital interests whichever way we can while we proceed with the negotiations.

[Raz] In other words, would you accept a withdrawal from the Golan? You say we should uphold our interests.

[Baraq] I think that one of the factors enabling the negotiations we are talking about is that the sides are abstaining from pushing the most difficult problems straight to the top of the agenda so that they will either be solved or end the negotiations. I think the possibility of discussing the whole complex of issues — the nature and quality of peace, its link to Lebanon and to an effective war against terror, a solution of the water problems, how to tackle the regional context, as well as the security arrangements and the depth of the withdrawal — entails a chance. To repeat, this requires a partner, and I hope we will find such a partner.

[Raz] You talked about security arrangements. The media has been talking at length about the early warning stations, which are actually a means. What are the security arrangements Israel needs in principle? In the negotiations with Syria, on what issues can Israel not give in in the context of the return of most of the Golan Heights?

[Baraq] The security arrangements encompass a broad spectrum, such as demilitarization, the thinning out of forces, the distribution of intelligence data acquired by satellites, other early warning measures, mutual inspections, hot lines, and advanced notice about maneuvers. It is a broad spectrum of issues that are linked to each other. Sometimes you have too much of one component and you need more of another. That is why this cannot be decided in advance before discussing it. Moreover, the depth and nature of the security arrangements we will require are connected to the nature of peace. One kind of security arrangements is required if our peace resembles the relations between the Netherlands and Belgium or perhaps even those between Jordan and Israel, and a different kind is needed if our peace resembles the relations between India and Pakistan or a very cold peace. Therefore, all the issues are connected, and the right way to sort them out is to engage in open negotiations in two respects: Both sides must be open to each other while keeping our eyes open about what we are doing.

[Raz] What you actually said now is that if this is a warm peace — the kind of peace we have with Jordan — we will be able to make some concession with regard to the security arrangements.

[Baraq] I have said more than once that, in my opinion, the right formula should be: The depth of the withdrawal will be tantamount to the nature of the peace and the strength of the security arrangements.

[Raz] Minister Baraq, when do you foresee a possible summit meeting between Prime Minister Peres and President al-Asad?

[Baraq] This cannot be assessed at the moment. Of course, we would be interested in such a development, and if the Syrians wanted it, it could be held soon. However, as the Bible says in another context: You stir not up nor awaken love until it please. So, it will happen when the Syrians please, and if preliminaries are needed before this happens, then we will prepare them. There is no love story here yet. Al-Asad is not a Zionist, but he is a very talented and experienced Syrian leader. I hope it is clear to him as well that it will ultimately be impossible to settle all the problems without a summit between him and Peres, even if this takes months.

[Raz] And you do believe that he really wants peace or at least an agreement?

[Baraq] It is my assessment that the Syrian president has reached the decision that a peace agreement will serve Syria. Of course, he wants a peace agreement on his own conditions rather than on ours. The issue of the negotiations is to ascertain whether there is a meeting point between his and our interests that upholds our vital interests while recognizing his.

[Raz] Minister Baraq, thank you very much.

Baraq Comments on Summit

MM1812104295 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 18 Dec 95 p 4

[Report on interview with Foreign Minister Ehud Barak by Julian Ozanne in Jerusalem on 17 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israeli-Syrian peace talks next week will focus on trying to arrange a summit between Mr Shimon Peres, Israeli prime minister, and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. This would be a "turning point" in Israeli-Syrian peace talks, Israel's new foreign minister said yesterday.

In his first foreign interview since becoming foreign minister last month, Mr Ehud Barak said Mr Asad

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had shown a fundamental positive change of attitude towards negotiations.

For the first time in three years of stalled negotiations Mr Asad had promised to be "flexible and creative" and he had also promised to give his representatives to the negotiations a broad mandate, he said.

Mr Barak said this laid a basis for progress, and next week's talks could pave the way for a summit between Mr Asad and Mr Peres. The breakthrough, Mr Barak said came after Mr Peres presented a new negotiating package to Mr Asad through Mr Christopher and agreed to enter into talks "without pre-conditions".

"Asad gave a positive response to these proposals. He sees there is something in our proposals. There are still wide gaps but he is ready to discuss and that is an important change," Mr Barak said.

Mr Barak, who met Syria's chief of staff earlier this year, denied that the last talks broke down over Syria's refusal to accept Israeli demands for an early warning station on the Golan after a peace deal. He said an early warning station was merely one element in a wide variety of security options and Israel's security demands were contingent on the extent of real peace.

"There are many ways to achieve our security goals and the exact cocktail should be negotiated between the two sides," he said. "For some reason the Syrians were unready to deal with the Gestalt of security. Now they are ready."

Israel, he said, wanted a real peace that "pacifies the inner ring of countries" around the Jewish state and ruled out the future prospect of war. Furthermore, secure peace with Syria would allow Israel to be more flexible in talks with Palestinians next year on a permanent status for Palestine.

Mr Barak said the time was not yet ripe for Israel to make a public commitment to Syrian sovereignty over the Golan Heights and a full Israeli withdrawal, Syria's central demands. Israel continued publicly to insist the depth of an Israeli troop withdrawal would be commensurate with the depth of peace achieved.

But he said Mr Asad understood that Mr Peres could make "visionary steps if the challenge was met from the other side".

Baraq on al-'Asad, U.S. Involvement

BR1812115395 Paris LE FIGARO in French 18 Dec 95 p 10

[Interview with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by Philippe Gelie; place and date not given: "Ehud Baraq: With Syria, Peace Will Pass Point of No-Return"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Gelie] How did Warren Christopher's visit to Damascus permit a breakthrough?

[Baraq] For the first time, Syrian President Hafiz al-'Asad showed himself to be flexible and creative. Furthermore, he gave his representatives a major mandate to negotiate, which he is not accustomed to doing, either. The third very important point concerns the difference in the tone and the atmosphere. There is a new kind of response to our concerns: Al-'Asad is no longer saying that the glass is half-empty, but is saying that it is half-full.

[Gelie] Has he altered his substantive position?

[Baraq] Not yet. Shim'on Peres has opened all doors of approach — a summit meeting, preparatory negotiations, confidential talks. From a substantive viewpoint, too, we have extended the spectrum of the talks: Southern Lebanon, economic cooperation, water, terrorism — because Damascus remains a kind of terrorist headquarters in the Middle East. Al-'Asad did not say "yes" to everything, but he did find something positive in the majority of our suggestions.

[Gelie] How do you explain this change?

[Baraq] Although I have never met with him personally, I think that Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination corrected a misconception on his part. Syrian leaders thought that resistance to the peace process in Israel was not great, that it was propaganda designed to raise the stakes. Furthermore, they realized that the final negotiations with the Palestinians would leave them standing alone. Last, they have perhaps realized that after the 1996 elections the governments could change in Israel and the United States. So Shim'on Peres' overtures constituted a test of credibility: They made it possible to break through the technical disagreements blocking the dialogue.

[Gelie] Has Israel made any new offers, for instance by relinquishing its warning posts along the Golan peninsula?

[Baraq] I do not think that Shim'on Peres made any new pledges with regard to the substance of the matters under discussion. We have never set the existence of warning posts on the Golan peninsula at the top of the

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list. As chief of staff, in Washington over a year ago, I presented my Syrian opposite number with a whole range of options concerning security, without imposing a diktat. Damascus used the warning posts as a pretext for claiming that we want to infringe its sovereignty. But we proposed Syrian posts in Galilee. Even back at that time we said that the method is unimportant if we achieve three objectives — to make a surprise attack against us virtually impossible; to considerably reduce factors liable to cause a total war; and to avert day-to-day incidents that could degenerate into a general confrontation. This means that there is a direct connection between the kind of peace agreement that we want to reach and the resulting security arrangements.

[Gelie] Is the cost of a peace agreement with Syria — a total withdrawal from Golan — not known in advance?

[Baraq] I can say no more than what Rabin used to say: The extent of the withdrawal will depend on the extent of the peace. The two sides do not hold the same cards: Withdrawal is a tangible card, a measurable factor. Things are much vaguer on the Syrian side: They concern the nature of the peace agreement, its extent, its quality — concepts that are difficult to negotiate.

[Gelie] Two years ago you spoke out against withdrawal from the Golan Heights...

[Baraq] I was in uniform: That was a strictly professional viewpoint. But the military aspect is only one part of the picture. In democracy it is politicians who make the decisions.

[Gelie] Do you believe that Peres will make a solemn statement to the Knesset recognizing Syria's sovereignty over the Golan Heights?

[Baraq] I do not rule it out, but I am sure that he will make the right statement at the right time. Let us first conduct the first series of negotiations in Washington at the end of December and the beginning of January. Before going into details, we must be sure there is agreement on the principles of peace with Syria. It takes two to tango.

[Gelie] Is the "warm peace" you want with Damascus realistic? Why should al-'Asad suddenly become a friend to Israel?

[Baraq] I do not expect him to become a Zionist, but he is experienced and smart enough to serve his own people's interests. We have learned to respect him on the battlefield: He will be a very capable negotiator. We have shared strategic interests in which the Syrians have a very major role to play: They could enable the Israeli-Arab peace process to pass the point of no-return, just as the Egyptians created a breakthrough in 1978.

[Gelie] What sign do you believe would indicate the success of the Washington talks?

[Baraq] An agreement on negotiating procedures and methods, whereby a deadlock over one aspect would not entail total breakdown but the contrary — the difficult dossiers would benefit from that.

[Gelie] Will you be personally involved in the negotiations?

[Baraq] I do not know if that will be necessary. The best thing would be to prepare the way for a Peres-al-'Asad summit, perhaps with Bill Clinton. I think that al-'Asad will see the need for it when the time comes.

[Gelie] Are you in favor of a "defense pact" between Israel and the United States?

[Baraq] Israel has only ever depended on itself for its security. We have never asked anyone to die in our place. [Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian in its 18 December issue on page 9 carries a version of the same interview in which Baraq is quoted as adding here: "But I do not rule out the possible arrival of 100, maybe 200, Americans."] If it is necessary to establish a monitoring post in Golan, I do not see why it could not be American; after all, Washington has had a battalion in Sinai for the past 20 years. But if you consider all our agreements with the United States, you will see that we already maintain very close relations. I wonder whether such a pact would facilitate dialogue with Syria. Perhaps this will be worth studying in a few years.

Ministers Express Initial Criticism

TA1712192195 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Video report by political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A day after the resumption of talks with Syria was announced, criticism is already being heard inside the cabinet about the way the negotiations are being handled. For instance, Minister Ya'aqov Tzur said that too much stress has been put on normalization and too little on security arrangements with Syria. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports:

[Begin Rosen recording] Unlike the late Yitzhaq Rabin, Shim'on Peres updates his ministers on the negotiations with Syria, or at least so it appears. Last night, he even invited them to a festive gathering with the U.S. secretary of state and his peace team. Up to now, the effort has seemed to pay off. No voices of rebuke or criticism were heard from the ministers about the Syrian track. But since we are drawing closer to the moment of

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truth, this is perhaps the time to start. Several ministers are willing to voice their opinions on the condition that they are not identified.

It is a mistake to talk about a defense pact with the Americans, they said. It weakens the Israeli claim for adequate security arrangements on the Golan Heights. Minister Ya'aqov Tzur was the first to voice public criticism. He told Channel 2: Peres is wrong in permitting the Americans to present their own bridging and compromise proposals. Tzur also said we are exaggerating in making normalization with Syria the negotiation's chief aim, and it is a mistake to equate the depth of normalization with the depth of the withdrawal. [passage omitted]

Parties, Golan Settlers Comment

TA1612204495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tzomet has decided to submit a motion of no confidence in the government. Knesset Member [MK] Refa'el Eytan is demanding that the elections be brought forward because he believes the speedy pace in the contacts with Syria proves that Israel has totally surrendered the Golan and does not want to put the matter to a referendum.

MK 'Imanu'el Zismann of the Third Way says that Prime Minister Peres substantially changed the principles set by Yitzhaq Rabin in the negotiations with Syria. According to him, Peres is prepared to pay a higher price and agrees to U.S. involvement which Rabin did not sanction.

The Golan Settlements Committee says that the announcement on the resumption of the negotiations with Syria came in the wake of the government's capitulation to Damascus' dictates. This is reported by our correspondents Yaron Deqel, Eytan Almog, and Ilan Ro'e.

MK Ran Kohen, chairman of the Meretz faction, welcomed the announcement on the resumption of the talks with Syria. In his opinion, this is a good security agreement which will bring an end to the wars and a halt to Hizballah terror.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Minister Amnon Rubinstein has announced that at next week's meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Legislation, he will demand that assistance be extended to those settlers who want to leave their homes. According to him, the government must take responsibility and help rather than punish those who want to adapt themselves to the new reality.

Likud Chairman Netanyahu Reacts

TA1612202995 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1820 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Interview with Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu by Gay Zohar in the studio — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Zohar] You have been watching with us the joint news conference held by Secretary Christopher and Prime Minister Peres. Please surprise us and tell us that, at this point, you are waiting to see what happens and are not worried.

[Netanyahu] Under normal conditions, I would welcome peace negotiations between Israel and Syria, as we welcomed the negotiations with Jordan. What we have here, however, is not a give-and-take process. Despite all the camouflage efforts by the prime minister and the cabinet ministers, it is clear as day that what we have here is a give-and-give process in which all of Syria's demands are being met across-the-board and in which the Syrians are being brought back to the edge of Lake Tiberias.

Look, I want peace as much as you do, but peace will reign as long as Syria knows that it cannot violate it in the future. As long as we are on the Golan, Syria knows that, but as soon as we descend from it, Syria will know that it will be able to launch a war in the future. Therein lies the entire weakness of the capitulation whose beginning we are witnessing now.

[Zohar] I supposed you noticed — and this will probably be underscored by the government in the next few days — that we are talking about a U.S. commitment to accelerate the talks to a very high speed. What can you do?

[Netanyahu] I have been repeatedly claiming that Mr. Peres wants these negotiations to help him in the elections. He is not holding the negotiations despite the elections but is doing this....

[Zohar, interrupting] I am asking you about President Clinton.

[Netanyahu] I will answer you precisely. I do not want to talk about the U.S. political agenda but about ours. This week, we witnessed our flight from Nabulus with our tail between our legs, the burning of our national flag, and 'Arafat's arrival there and his declaration that he intends to liberate Jerusalem and all of Palestine with blood and fire. It goes without saying that we are not witnessing the change we would like to see. This government is retreating to the 1967 lines on all fronts. Mr. Peres apparently does not want to go to the elections with the sorry results of the Oslo agreement. That is why, like you said, he is making an accelerated

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move. And, as your political correspondent Mr. Rosen said earlier, Peres has in effect conveyed to Syria — although he did not say it in the news conference — a commitment to retreat to the international line — that is, to bring the Syrians back to the edge of Lake Tiberias. Peace will not come out of it.

[Zohar] Mr. Netanyahu, thank you very much for your prompt reaction.

Internal Security Minister Shahal Interviewed

TA1612130595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0805 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal by Eytan Almog; place and date not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Almog] We have just heard the report on the resumption of the talks with the Syrians. Minister Shahal, what does it mean?

[Shahal] I believe it means that there is a reasonable chance of reaching a peace agreement with Syria. The model will be the peace with Egypt, and the negotiating process might at some stage reach the Camp David format. We are talking about a comprehensive regional peace with almost all the Arab states — except for Iraq and Libya — and perhaps even the Muslim world. We are talking about the presence of all the Arab leaders at the signing ceremony. Most important is that the United States will probably have a more active role. It will not only relay messages and plans but will also initiate proposals.

Three things will lead to the signing of an agreement: the nature of peace, the security components, and the border issue: whether it will be the international border or the 4 June 1967 line.

[Almog] Thank you, Mr. Minister.

[Shahal] Thank you.

Ultra-Orthodox May Agree To Hand Golan to Syria

TA1712142195 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 17 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Uri Rodriguez-Garcia]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Knesset Member Avraham Ravitz has hinted that ultra-Orthodox Jewry might agree to civil marriages with the aim of avoiding what it regards as a much greater danger, Reform marriages. In an interview to DAVAR RISHON, Ravitz also referred to the possibility that United Torah Jewry would join the government, and said that his party would agree to handing over the Golan Heights to Syrian sovereignty on condition that the Jewish settlements there are not evacuated.

"Ultra-Orthodox Jewry will not fight against civil marriages with the same fervor as against Reform marriages. From our point of view, the greater danger lies in Reform marriages," Rabbi Ravitz said.

Ravitz explained that Reform conversions and marriages would put the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel in a kind of "ghetto." If Reform conversions and marriages are recognized, the ultra-Orthodox will not be able to wed other Israelis, since their Jewishness would be in doubt. Ravitz did not regard favorably the idea of civil marriages, but hinted that the ultra-Orthodox would find it easier to live with it than Reform marriages or conversions.

DAVAR RISHON has learned that other ultra-Orthodox circles also tend to agree to civil marriages as a solution for alternative marriages for the secular community. In talks held recently between various rabbis and leftist politicians, the rabbis agreed, off the record, that it would not be possible to put off the implementation of civil weddings in Israel for long and that the ultra-Orthodox would be forced to agree to alternative marriages.

Religious Affairs Minister Shim'on Shetrit refused to comment on the issue, but said that he has a "contingency plan" which he will present to the public at the appropriate time.

Ravitz also referred to the issue of the Golan Heights, saying that "all options for joining the government have still not been sealed." He said that if Prime Minister Shim'on Peres manages to build trust among the ultra-Orthodox public then he will also receive "points in his favor" among important ultra-Orthodox rabbis on the Golan issue.

Ravitz said he would support Peres if he reaches an agreement with Syria to hand over the Golan to Syrian sovereignty but leave the Jewish settlements where they are, in a setup similar to the agreement with the Palestinian Authority. "If Peres manages to reach that situation, then he is assured of the support of the ultra-Orthodox. If anything else is decided on, then perhaps," Ravitz said. [passage omitted]

NRP Submits No-Confidence Motion Over Golan

TA1812152295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The National Religious Party [NRP] has submitted a motion of no confidence in the government over what it terms the desecration of the

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Sabbath and the abandonment of Jewish values, along with the abandonment of the asset of the Golan Heights in the political negotiations. Our correspondent Eytan Almog reports that all six NRP Knesset members will support the motion, which will be raised in the Knesset next week.

Two Labor MK's To Join Motion

TA1712161195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Labor Knesset Members Avigdor Qahalani and 'Imanu'el Zismann say they will join a no-confidence motion in the government presented by Tzomet next week. Opposition parties are joining forces to oppose the resumption of negotiations with Syria and are preparing an action campaign against a withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The Likud has also announced it will present a motion of no-confidence over the talks with Syria next week. Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu had this to say:

[Begin Netanyahu recording] [passage omitted] I intend to bring together this week all the forces opposing the move of the government to get off the Golan Heights. This includes the opposition parties, the Third Way, extraparliamentary groups. We will bring forward first a no-confidence vote, but equally we will examine the possibility of summoning again the vote to cement the Golan Heights Law that nearly passed last time it was brought forward in Mr. Qahalani's proposal. [end recording]

Sarid: Palestinian Elections Tantamount to State

TA1812071895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Environment Minister Yosi Sarid says in many respects the upcoming Palestinian elections are tantamount to the establishment of a Palestinian state. He was speaking to a gathering of the Jewish-Arab Committee for Economic Cooperation. Palestinian Authority senior official Nabil Sha'th, who also attended the meeting, said Israeli Arabs could serve as the liaison for regional cooperation.

Biran Denies Pessimism on Jerusalem Security

TA1812071695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Central Command, Major General Ilan Biran, reportedly told Jerusalem City Council members that Jewish residents of Jerusalem have a reason to be concerned about the army withdrawal from Ramallah and Bethlehem. Leaders of the coalition in the city council, including coalition head Shmu'el Me'ir, met yesterday with Maj. Gen. Biran. They quote him as saying that the army could not protect residents of the Gilo neighborhood, for example, from a Palestinian terrorist attack. And they add, when Biran was asked if he is optimistic, he replied no and said that terrorist attacks will continue.

In response, the IDF spokesman said the head of Central Command is not pessimistic about the security of Jerusalem residents, and does not believe an army withdrawal from Ramallah and Bethlehem poses a danger to them.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 18 December adds: "Maj. Gen. Biran denies the remarks attributed to him by Deputy Jerusalem Mayor Shmu'el Me'ir, to the effect he is concerned about an expected deterioration in the security of Jerusalem in the wake of the redeployment."

["Maj. Gen. Biran denied the remarks attributed to him and said that the residents of Pisgat Ze'ev, Gilo, and Talpiyyot have no reason to be concerned. He emphasized that the IDF has ample means for defending the residents of Jerusalem. In Bayt Jala, for example, the IDF has a better answer to the security problems than it has had in the past."]

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King, Christopher Discuss Peace Talks, Iraq

JN1612135995 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1227 GMT 16 Dec 95

[News conference by King Husayn and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher with unidentified foreign and domestic correspondents in al-'Aqabah on 16 December — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Husayn] Ladies and gentlemen, I am very, very happy indeed to have this opportunity to welcome Secretary of State Christopher back to Jordan. It has been an opportunity for us to express our admiration for the president and the secretary, and for their great achievements in the recent past, particularly regarding Bosnia. And we know how committed the secretary is to the cause of a comprehensive peace in this region. His being here once again gives us great hope that before long we will see the realization of a dream of a comprehensive peace in this region, with the participation of all concerned.

As far as our bilateral relations are concerned, they are as they have never been in terms of their strength and warmth. And we are very, very happy with the opportunity to discuss them with the secretary. All I can say is a very warm welcome to you my friend, once again, here in Jordan.

[Christopher] Thank you very much, Your Majesty. It's wonderful to be back in Jordan and it's particularly nice to be here in al-'Aqaba. It reminds me of home; reminds me of southern California at its very best, your majesty, and I particularly enjoy being here, if only for a few hours. As always, I greatly value the opportunity to consult with the king and have the benefit of his very wise and experienced counsel. The last time we were together was at the funeral of Prime Minister Rabin, our friend and partner. I don't think any of us will ever forget the very moving words that the king spoke at that funeral. It was a reminder that peace in the Middle East has had no better or more courageous friend than King Husayn.

Jordan's peace treaty with Israel shows us what the real face of peace looks like, a warm peace, not just abstractions on paper but actions on the ground that are changing the lives of people for the better, to tourism, buisnness projects, and to enhanced trade. The peace between Israel and Jordan is becoming a peace between their peoples, and that is the surest guarantee of a lasting settlement. Really, it is a model, Your Majesty, for the entire region.

Jordan is working to extend the opportunities of peace to the entire Middle East. As you know, the Amman Economic Summit under the leadership of the king and Crown Prince Hasan was a milestone that highlighted the economic potential of this region, a success beyond its expectations.

Today, the king and I had a good discussion, not only of the peace process, the progress on the Syrian track, but several other issues, as well, Iraq, Bosnia, the Gulf generally speaking. I had a chance to reiterate to the king President Clinton's deep appreciation for Jordan's role and promoting regional peace and stability. We're determined to do all we can to stand by Jordan, support its wellbeing and security. We intend to that because it is in our national interests. Your Majesty, thank you very much for the opportunity to be with you for only too short a time.

[Husayn] Thank you, my friend.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency: We've heard several times President Clinton and you, sir, mentioning that you're willing to assist Jordan in order to modernize its armed forces. When do we expect to see this translated into practical steps? Thank you.

[Christopher] Well, the Congress of the United States is completing action on a bill that will enable a drawdown of some of defense articles for the use of Jordan. And I think that will be an important step forward. Secretary Perry, secretary of defense, will be coming here in about a month for further discussions of security issues with the king, and at that time they'll be analyzing how the United States might give some tangible effect to the general sentiments that I mentioned.

[Correspondent] Mr. Christopher: The United States has reiterated its commitment to ensure the success of the MENA summit which was recently held in Amman. What actual steps and measures your government has taken to materialize the recommendations and resolutions of the conference? Thank you.

[Christopher] No, I am very sorry, I did not hear the first part of your question. I did not hear what you're asking me.

[Correspondent] I said the United States has reiterated its commitment to ensure the success of the MENA conference which was held recently in Jordan. The other part, what are the actual measures and steps which your government has taken to materialize the resolutions and recommendations?

[Christopher] Of the Amman conference?

[Husayn] Yes.

[Correspondent] MENA summit, yes, MENA summit?

[Christopher] We discussed that in the meeting with the king. And Deputy Assistant Secretary Tony Verstandig,

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who is here with me today. indicated to the king that we're going to be working with the government of Jordan on a follow-up plan to ensure that the benefits of the Amman summit can be achieved. I am very glad to hear that there have been a number of positive outcomes, a number of companies have committed to tangible projects in the wake of the Amman summit. I understand that representatives from Egypt are already here to talk about next year's Cairo conference. So this is a continuing process in which the United States will continue to play a role. But we'll be working with the Jordanian Government to ensure that we have a very sound follow-up program as was briefly discussed. And Crown Prince Hasan has sent a message indicating how he thinks we might work together on some tangible ideas for carrying forward Amman.

[Correspondent] Mr. Secretary: Are there any impediments left between Israel and Syria resuming negotiations?

[Christopher] Well, as you know, Carol, yesterday I met extensively with President al-Asad. And I've come to Israel, where I had a family dinner because of the Sabbath last night with the prime minister. Tonight we're going to be having a business meeting to discuss further the results of my conversation in Damascus yesterday. And, I think that we're still trying to finalize the way in which we might most effectively renew the discussions. So I have nothing to announce at the present time. But before I leave the region after I've had further talks with the parties, I hope to be able to do so.

[Correspondent] Your Majesty, I would like to ask you about Iraq. Can you, first of all, tell us a little bit about your effort to organize a new Iraqi opposition group. What are you trying to do? Will there be a summit here in early 1996? What are the prospects? And Mr. Secretary, does the United States support this effort?

[Husayn] Thank you very much indeed for the opportunity to speak about this subject. I think a lot has been said about it in recent past, and unfortunately, not all accurately or reflecting the facts. I would like to say that as far as Iraq is concerned, we have always been extremely concerned with the situation in Iraq, with the suffering of its people. And we have always been dedicated to the cause of alleviating this suffering. And this suffering comes from two directions. Iraq is facing denial, in terms of its people, internally of their human rights. Iraq is a country that could represent pluralism in this entire region. Iraq has tremendous resources, but unfortunately, absent democracy, pluralism, respect of human rights, Iraq has suffered enormously, in addition to the embargo which has continued and which has denied the Iraqi people much of what they need and require. So, to answer the question I would like to say, first of all, that the most important element that I recognize is the need to do whatever is possible to prevent Iraq from disintegrating. In other words, when people speak about the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq; that is precisely our objective, to safeguard the unity and the territorial integrity of that country, and that our suggestion has been that people representing Iraq should come together—people who represent all the different mosaic that is Iraq should come together—to send a message to every Iraqi, to assure the Iraqis that national reconciliation is there, and the Iraqis will remain together, and maybe to give the Iraqis some idea about what the future holds for them. Much has been said about the federation. All I said in my meetings with many Iraqis throughout the recent period was that as far as I am concerned:

A. I have no personal ambition in Iraq.

B. I am calling upon them to come together as rapidly as possible to save Iraq from disintegration. And in regard to a federation, it could be one of the ideas that they could discuss, but that is up to them, not to me. And of course, when we speak about a federation or confederation, Germany is a federation. The United States is an example of how people come together. There are many many bright examples in this world. If that is what they wish. So we are not talking about anything less than safeguarding the unity and territorial integrity of the country, and finally that whatever they agree upon is something which is up to them to decide, and we will do whatever we can for the safety, territorial integrity, unity of Iraq in the future, and for its getting out to become a part of the world and a part of this region once again, and for its people to live the life that is worthy of them. And at the same time, our role is purely there to tell them that if they have so many different ideas and approaches, they should try to come together, and put them together, and act in the interest of Iraq and its future.

[Christopher] There is very little that I need to add to the king's comprehensive statement. We share a very strong opposition to Saddam Husayn. We're searching for the best ways to make that opposition effective. Jordan has taken a number of steps recently to make clear its opposition to Saddam Husayn. Saddam's effort to improperly acquire weapons of mass destruction or other weapons that are improper for them to acquire has been evidenced in the last few days as has the willingness and determination of Jordan to prevent that from happening. As you know, they've captured some parts that were going into Iraq. It is now for the United Nations, which has the responsibility to investigate that and follow up on it, but I just want to underscore

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the United States' strong conviction, as the king has expressed, the importance of territorial integrity and unity of Iraq and steps that would contribute to that end, and which show a unity in the opposition and in maintenance of the territorial integrity, would be welcomed. And I think what the king is trying to do, and many are trying to do, is to find the basis for most effectively doing that.

[Correspondent] What about the summit, and secondly, is your goal to encourage them to establish a government in exile?

[Husayn] That's entirely up to them. And whether they will meet, how they will meet, is something that they will have to determine. And all we are suggesting is that they should enter into a real, meaningful dialogue to give people within Iraq the assurance and to give them hope as to exactly what the future should hold for a united Iraq and for its people. And the last thing, just, I know many of you have asked me time and again about, over the subject of confederation or federation. We don't seem to get it right in any respect in terms of a lot of criticism that occurs to us, but you'll remember how many questions have been asked about the possible confederation with Palestine in the future. And of course this is something up to the people to decide when they are able to do so. Federation is a much stronger link than confederation, so why is federation here something that shouldn't even be discussed and so terrible and why should confederation be something that is interesting as far as Jordan and Palestine are concerned. All we are interested in is people and their determining exactly what their future should be. And hopefully, when our Palestinian brethren are able to do so — and we are so happy to see them take steps everyday that enable them to be more free and more able to express themselves than has been the case in the past — at the right time in the future, people will decide exactly what the relation should be. And as far as Iraq is concerned, the same applies. We would like to see a dialogue between the Iraqis and hopefully to see them free, to be a part of a bright future of this entire region.

[Correspondent] Christopher, when do you expect Syria to sign a peace treaty with Israel, and would you influence the Israeli side to respond to the Syrian requirements concerning the complete withdrawal?

[Christopher] On the question you asked with respect to Israel and Syria, the United States is willing to use its very best efforts to try to help the parties find a way to a peace agreement between Syria and Israel. I cannot give any predictions as to whether that is going to take place or when it is going to take place. I can say that, based upon my conversations in the last two days, the leaders of both countries are determined to move forward and to pick up the pace of doing so. With respect to the second half of your question, it really would not be proper for me to say as to what the United States' position is on any of the elements. The negotiation, that really is for the parties to do. We will assist them in every way we can to facilitate their discussions and hope that they do reach a satisfactory result before too long.

[Husayn] Thank you very, very much.

[Christopher] Thank you very much, your majesty.

Al-Kabariti on Ties With Syria, Iraq, Kuwait

JN1812093895 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 18 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Ayman Rumanah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following his recent meeting with Syrian counterpart Faruq al-Shar, Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has described Jordanian-Syrian relations as having a special nature.

In an exclusive statement to AL-MAJD, al-Kabariti said Syrian security is part of Jordanian security, and what harms Syria necessarily harms Jordan because of the linked destinies of the two fraternal countries.

He added: Our Arab people in Syria love their brothers in Jordan, and they like and respect Jordan's government and people in spite of any passing political disagreement.

Following a meeting with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of the Representatives yesterday, al-Kabariti said the Jordanian Government has not receive any official protest concerning the arrest of Engineer Layth Shubaylat, head of the Engineers Association, and that no comment should be made regarding something that the judiciary is examining.

On banning the entry of a Jordanian delegation to participate in Nabulus celebrations by the Israeli authorities last Friday, al-Kabariti said the government will inquire about the party that banned the entry of the delegation.

On the Iraqi opposition conference that will be held in Amman, he said there is no fixed date for convening the conference, and the brothers in the opposition have full freedom to chose the appropriate time and venue.

Sources from Foreign Affairs Committee meeting told AL-MAJD that al-Kabariti said all Jordanian steps reflect Jordan's eagerness to maintain Iraq's unity and lift the siege imposed on its people. He said Jordan is eager to have an Arab solution to the Iraqi issue because without this solution the repercussions will be grave, and they will have negative effects on Jordan. He also

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said Jordan does not oppose hosting the Iraqi opposition conference.

Al-Kabariti also spoke about Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations, and emphasized that Jordan did all it was asked to do, and expressed deep satisfaction with the resumption of postal and telephone contacts between the two countries.

Answering a question by a deputy on the benefits Jordan would derive from joining NATO, al-Kabariti said: If Jordan joins NATO as a supporting member of the alliance, it would receive NATO's weapons surpluses without any financial or political commitments.

Al-Kabariti: 'Open' to Iraqi Dissident Conference

JN1812092395 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 18 Dec 95 , pp 1, 7

["Special to the JORDAN TIMES" by Tariq al-Mumani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti said on Sunday Jordan was open to the idea of hosting a conference by the Iraqi opposition groups with the aim of detaching the opposition from any international influence that might undermine Iraqi sovereignty or the integrity of Iraqi soil.

Speaking to the press following a meeting with the Lower House of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. al-Kabariti said no date was yet set for any such conference, whose formula and mechanism were not yet defined.

He said Jordan always aims to preserve the integrity of Iraqi territory and the unity of Iraqi people, stressing that neither Jordan nor its leadership has any personal ambitions in Iraq.

The Minister also stressed Jordan's keenness to lift the siege impose don the Iraqi people since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and to support it through its ordeal to enable it to retrieve its focal role at the Arab and international levels.

He said his meeting with the Lower House Committee was comprehensive and frank, and that it dealt with various Arab issues, including Jordan's ties with other Arab countries, the Middle East peace process and developments in the region.

Committee rapporteur Nazih 'Ammarin said the meeting took place at a request by committee chairman 'Abdallah al-Nusur.

He said Mr. al-Kabariti talked in detail on Jordan's stand on Iraq and the Kingdom's keenness to preseve the integrity of Iraqi territory and the unity of Iraqi people and to ensure an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Mr. 'Ammarin said the foreign minister voiced Jordan's interest in resolving the Iraqi problem within an Arab framework to avoid internationalising it.

He added that the minister said Jordan was ready to host an Iraqi opposition conference to detach it from any international influence that might harm Iraqi sovereignty.

The deputy added that the minister said Jordan had showed good intentions to wards Kuwait and did all it was requested to do to improve ties with the emirate, strained since the 1990 invasion, and received with relief the resumption of telephone and mail links with the emirate.

The minister, according to Mr. 'Ammarin, also briefed the committee on the deportation of the third secretary in the Iranian embassy in Amman, explaining that the secretary's activities were incompatible with his work as a diplomat.

The deputy continued that Mr. al-Kabariti said Jordan's relations with Syria were improving and that differences were being resolved.

Mr. al-Kabariti also briefed the committee on the advantages of Jordan's joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as a supporting member, and said such membership would enable Jordan to obtain surplus arms from NATO at minimum costs without political commitments.

Al-Kabariti: No 'Political Objectives' in Iraq

JN1712192295 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Foreign Affairs Committee in the Lower House of Parliament has met with Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. Head of the committee Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nusur said the meeting discussed a number of issues, including the latest developments in the peace process in the area, the Jordanian relations with Arab Gulf countries, Iraq, and the United Nations sanctions.

Dr. al-Nusur said that the foreign minister has talked about these topics in detail and clarity and replied to queries raised by the lawmakers on various issues. He said that Mr. al-Kabariti stressed the Jordanian firm stands as regards the problems of the region. Mr. al-Kabariti said all official statements on Iraq aim at protecting the interest of the Iraqi people and Jordan harbors no political objectives thereof.

Mr. al-Nusur added that the foreign minister reiterated the solid Jordanian policy, whose aim is to lift the sanctions off the Iraqis and said the kingdom always

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worked for the return of Iraq to the Arab fold. He also said that Jordan is open to other Arab countries and its goal is to positively develop its ties with all Arabs on the basis of mutual respect, equal footing, and cooperation.

Energy Minister on Iraqi Oil Imports, Pipeline

JN1612101295 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 16 Dec 95 p 11

[Interview with Samih Darwazah, minister of energy and mineral resources, by correspondent Iyad al-Waqfi in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Waqfi] Which companies signed contracts with Jordan to drill for oil?

[Darwazah] We are negotiating with four U.S. and Malaysian companies. A delegation from the Natural Resources Authority was sent to Malaysia to discuss with the Malaysians the areas where they want to drill for oil. The drilling process, which is expected to begin within three months at the latest, will focus on the Dead Sea area and the central areas of Jordan. We hope that the drilling operations will cover all the areas of the kingdom according to the agreements concluded with world oil companies which the Jordanian Government will sign within the next few weeks. The Jordanian Government is dealing with two U.S. oil companies to drill for gas in cooperation with the recently-established National Petroleum Company.

[Al-Waqfi] There were recent reports that Jordan would provide the self-rule areas with oil. How far did this project go?

[Darwazah] We are fully ready to provide the self-rule areas with its needs of various oil products. However, the self-rule areas are linked to these companies with contracts. Once these contracts expire, it will be up to the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] to decide whether to build new refineries or import its needs of these products. Jordan thus far has not officially been requested to provide the PNA with oil, and no quantities have been defined at this point. [passage omitted]

[Al-Waqfi] Do the quantities of oil imported from Iraq cover all the Kingdom's oil needs?

[Darwazah] Iraq provides the Kingdom with enough amounts of various oil products except liquid gas, especially during the winter season. Jordan gets more than 70,000 barrels of Iraqi oil each day.

[Al-Waqfi] Where did the project for a pipeline between Jordan and Iraq reach? Why has it not been implemented until now? And how much is its overall cost?

[Darwazah] The project is economically feasible and provides the Kingdom with huge amounts of money from the process of transporting oil using approximately 2,000 oil tankers. Once technical experts from Jordan and Iraq finish their studies, the implementation process will begin. The project will cost approximately $300 million. [passage omitted]

Paper Defends Iraq's Stand on UN Oil Resolution

JN1712194095 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 17 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Posture vs Posturing"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Iraqi regime has been repeatedly held responsible for the suffering of its people by denying them basic foods and medicines that could have been financed from the sale of limited amounts of oil under U.N. Security Council Resolution 986. Many quarters have expressed outrage at this Iraqi posture every time the Iraqi regime turned down yet another opportunity to sell some of its oil under Resolution 986 as indeed happened a few days ago. Critics from the four corners of the world have blamed Iraq for seemingly putting a higher premium on its pride and sovereignty rights than on the basic needs of its poverty and sickness stricken people.

What has been left largely unsaid is why Iraq might be against accepting Resolution 986.

On taking a closer look at that resolution it would be easily discerned that the real problem lies elsewhere and not in Baghdad's insistence on absolute sovereignty rights over the regime under which its oil would be sold and marketed. For starters, Iraq is asked under the terms of the resolution to transport its oil through the Turkish pipeline at the exclusion of every other outlet. On this score alone, it could be legitimately asked why Iraqi oil must be shipped through one specific means or another if the prime purpose of any such sale is to solve some of Iraq's pressing humanitarian needs and compensate victims of the Gulf war. There is no reasonable humanitarian or administrative justification that we are able to see or detect between permitting Iraqi oil sales under international supervision and confining shipments through a specific pipeline. The only visible explanation is that there must be other considerations than humanitarian or control related agenda that lie behind the decision to restrict oil sales through one outlet at the expense of all others which can also be internationally controlled and supervised.

The picture becomes even more troubling when it is discovered that revenues from the oil sales would be spent on Iraqis under international supervision not for

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the purpose of assuring their dispensation on humanitarian or equitable basis but rather on other grounds that seem to be purely political. A classic example of the incredible formula for revenue allocations under the resolution in question is the insistence that money earned by any such oil sale would be spent on regional basis within the country and under direct control and supervision of the U.N. In other words, the north of Iraq, the home of Iraqi Kurds, would receive direct financial aid generated by the sale of oil from the international organisation without the Iraqi authorities having any say in the matter. The end result becomes obvious and indeed untenable. The de facto separation of the north would end up being financed and consolidated by Iraqi oil revenues. In a round about way, therefore, Baghdad is called upon to foot the bill of its own division and dismemberment. There is little wonder, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz was not able to stomach the international deal being repeatedly offered to his country for selling its oil even though that would be at the expense of his own hungry and sick people.

This is not meant to absolve the Iraqi regime from its prime responsibility for bringing the country and people to the irreversible disasters when it was obvious to all that catastrophe was in the making the minute Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait. For this much the Iraqi leadership can never be forgiven. But Baghdad can be forgiven for not accepting at face value the terms of Resolution 986 as it is presently construed because it has become clear that there is more in that "humanitarian" resolution than meets the eye, and Iraq is justified in being cautious about implementing it.

It is up to the U.N. now to offer something more concrete and more reasonable. The idea is not to make it impossible for Iraq to accept any and all offers. The goal is to help the Iraqi people survive under these extremely difficult circumstances.

Goverment Asks Saudi Arabia To Supply Gas

JN1612113695 Amman AL-MASHRIQ in Arabic 18-25 Dec 95 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordan is expected to sign an agreement with Iraq at the end of this month for its 1996 oil needs, estimated at approximately 3.1 million tonnes of crude oil. This is in addition to other oil products, including approximately 120,000 tonnes of liquid gas, 300,000 tonnes of diesel oil, and approximately 800,000 tonnes of fuel oil. These amounts will be transported by approximately 2,000 Jordanian tanker trucks.

Sources from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said that these amounts increased by 5 percent as compared to last year due to an increase in local consumption. Iraq is supplying Jordan with approximately 70,000 barrels of crude oil each day.

A Jordanian delegation — headed by Muhammad al-Bashir, acting secretary general of the Ministry of Energy — will visit Iraq this week to discuss final arrangements dealing with the agreement.

Ministry of Energy sources said that the ministry submitted a request to the Saudi Ministry of Petroleum to supply Jordan with gas used to generate electricity and to meet the factories' energy needs. However, the Saudi ministry has not yet responded.

King Phones Yemen's Salih Over Eritrea Dispute

JN1712204295 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report; from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His majesty the king was assured on the situation in Yemen and the latest tension in relations between Yemen and Eritrea.

In a telephone conversation with the Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, the king asserted the need to solve the differences between the two countries by dialogue and by understanding.

Israel Bars Delegation From Nabulus Celebrations

JN1512213395 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 15 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report; from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel has prevented Jordan's delegation from attending the celebrations in Nabulus on the evacuation of the Israeli occupation forces. The delegation includes 400 parliamentarians, journalists, and other public figures.

Jordan's news agency, PETRA, said the delegation headed to the King Husayn main crossing this morning on their way to Nabulus, but were prevented entry by the Israeli authorities.

Israeli Action Questioned

JN1612083695 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 16 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Road Signs To Peace Beyond Nabulus"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At a time when Israel needs to do what it can, even go out of its way, to convince the Arab people of its genuine desire to make an equitable and lasting peace with them, the Israeli authorities find

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it fit to do exactly the opposite of what can strengthen that cause. Yesterday, those authorities forced several hundred Jordanians, including a former prime minister and about 20 members of Parliament, to abandon plans to join their brethren in Nabulus in celebrating the end of military occupation of the city and the dawning of the new era for peace. Instead of allowing, even encouraging the group to travel inside the West Bank, the Israeli authorities obviously procrastinated at the King Husayn Bridge, prompting the group to abandon the visit altogether.

We wonder whether the Israeli officials behind the episode did spare a moment to contemplate what their action meant as far as "relating" peace to the people of Jordan is concerned. The would-be visitors were obviously closely screened for "security" reasons by the Israelis much earlier—since it was a very meticulously planned and arranged trip—and only those who were "cleared" by the Israelis were in fact present at the bridge to cross to the West Bank. As such, Israel cannot cite "security reasons" for the obvious hurdles its posed against the visit.

All that the Jordanians in the group wanted to do was to express their genuine happiness over the course of the Palestinian-Israeli track of the peace process and share in the joy of the Palestinians, whether in Nabulus or anywhere else in the West Bank and Gaza, over seeing the flag of military occupation coming down and the Palestinian flag going up, signalling a new era yet in the quest for peace and coexistence in the region.

It is highly unlikely that the Israelis gave any serious consideration to the possible fallout of the aborted visit on the general psyche of those who were members of the group as well as the Jordanian public at large whom Israel is courting in its own way to consolidate the state of peace between Jordan and the Jewish state.

Political theories abound as to why the Israeli behaviour at the bridge yesterday. Some even suggested that Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat, for considerations of his own, was behind prompting the Israelis to abort the Jordanian group's visit. Even the hypothesis that Mr. 'Arafat was indeed behind the affair does not absolve Israel of its own responsibility to behave in a manner that is conducive to building confidence among Jordanians who sincerely believe that the state of hostility with Israel as a neighbour is over and done with and peace has actually dawned across the Jordanian-Israeli frontier after the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty more than one year ago.

And if indeed is the real shape of things to come in Israeli behaviour, the net loser in the bargain will be those who support peace, which was found after decades of laborious search, and the cause to build on that peace.

Editor in Chief Referred to Criminal Court

JN1812095195 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 18 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] For the first time in the history of the Jordanian press — whether in the martial law era or in the so-called democratic era — the public prosecutor has ordered that AL-MAJD editor in chief Fahd al-Rimawi be referred to the Amman Criminal Court. Al-Rimawi is charged with disturbing the kingdom's relations with a foreign country (Bahrain) by writing, in violation of the provisions of Article 2/118 of the Penal Code, which gives a sentence of at least five years.

The decision, which is a serious precedent, was made in light of an article entitled "The Glubb Pasha of Bahrain Must Leave," published by AL-MAJD on 20 February. The article was written by 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Nu'aymi, a Bahraini opposition leader, in which he urges the Bahraini authorities to follow the example of the Jordanian leadership by expelling British General Ian Henderson, director of security and intelligence in Bahrain. The Jordanian leadership expelled British General Glubb Pasha, who had served as chief of staff of the Jordanian Arab Legion until the mid-1950's.

The Press and Publication Department had filed a complaint with the Amman public prosecutor late February over this article, in response to a request by the Bahraini Amiri Court. However, Muhammad Taysir Tubayshat, the Amman public prosecutor, decided on 24 June 1995 not to prosecute the editor in chief, since "the article in question openly calls on the regime of the sisterly State of Bahrain to Arabize foreign command, following the example of our wise Hashemite leadership, which Arabized the command of the Jordanian Arab Legion. The Arabization is now a national holiday celebrated every year."

When this decision was sent to the general prosecutor to pursue legal formalities, Husni 'Ammarin, an assistant to the general prosecutor, decided on behalf of the general prosecutor to revoke the decision of the Amman public prosecutor and to charge the editor in chief with the crime of disturbing the kingdom's relations with a foreign country. 'Ammarin returned the file to the Amman public prosecutor to prepare the charge sheet and the prosecution's list of exhibits and to communicate this list to the defendant (the editor in chief) and refer the file to the Amman Criminal Court.

So far, the following lawyers have volunteered to defend the AL- MAJD editor in chief: Dr. Hani al-

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Khasawinah, Jawad Yunus, Ahmad al-Najdawi, 'Abd-al-Karim Hammad, and Wisam al-Rimawi.

In this context, a delegation representing Amnesty International visited AL-MAJD the day before yesterday and heard a briefing by the editor in chief about the serious threat this move poses to the future of the Jordanian press and the future of AL-MAJD if the Israeli Government decides to file a complaint against it, since the newspaper calls for eliminating the Israeli entity in its entirety. Lawyer Jawad Yunus also briefed the delegation on the file and details of the case. The delegation included Elizabeth Hegen and al-'Umari Shiruf [names as transliterated].

It is worth mentioning that the editor in chief is still being tried at the Amman Court of First Instance for three lawsuits filed by the Press and Publication Department two years ago. Two other lawsuits against the editor in chief have been settled.

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Buwayz Signs Accord Regulating UNIFIL Status

NC1612070095 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanon and the United Nations yesterday signed an agreement regulating the status of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] operating in south Lebanon with the Lebanese government. This agreement comes 17 years, eight months, and 27 days since this force was assigned its tasks in south Lebanon when Security Council resolution 425 was passed on 19 March 1978. The agreement was signed for Lebanon by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz and for UNIFIL by its commander [Stanislav Worzniak].

Timor Goksel, political adviser to UNIFIL, who attended the signing ceremony, noted that the Israeli aggression against the Norwegian contingent in Blat was serious and that the UNIFIL command is holding contacts with the Israeli party over the incident.

Hizballah MP's To Oppose Peace Agreement

NC1712071795 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Muhammad Funaysh, member of the Loyalty to the Resistance parliamentary bloc, has questioned the ability of the recently proposed peace to restore our rights to our land and identity. He affirmed that Israel will continue to be our enemy, no matter how hard colonialism tries to turn it into a partner that shares our wealth.

Deputy Funaysh pointed out that the Resistance will undertake the responsibility of sensitizing the nation to the risks involved in normalization with the enemy. He revealed that Hizballah deputies will not vote in favor of a settlement agreement with the Zionists at the Chamber of Deputies.

Fadlallah Criticizes U.S. Policy on Iran

NC1612082595 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ayatollah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah noted the continuing U.S. campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran. He said: We are not agents of Iran, as certain people allege, but we are brothers. We integrate with them and they integrate with us. He said that after the failure of its economic embargo against Iran, the U.S. Administration is seeking to make the Congress pass resolutions to punish the European, particularly French, companies that have economic dealings with Iran. He pointed out that the U.S. Administration wants Congress to allot a budget to stir up disturbances inside Iran, so as to confuse it. He said that the U.S. Administration is doing this to serve the Zionist enemy, who wishes to remain superior to all regional countries on the political, security, and economic levels.

Fadlallah said that the United States is seeking to facilitate accommodation of the Israeli enemy's economic plans into the Arab economy. It grants the enemy freedom of action and the most advanced weapons to bombard civilians in south Lebanon and western al-Biqa' without uttering a word of regret. He noted that the U.S. President offered condolences to Israel and condemned the fair bombardment of the Zionist settlements. He said that the United States hates us, all the oppressed people, and the countries opposed to its policy and hegemony and the Israeli enemy hegemony of Iran, Lebanon, and Syria.

Reportage on Israeli, 'Resistance' Clashes in South

Israeli Overflights, Shelling

NC1612080395 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Zionist helicopters flew over the central sector of south Lebanon repeatedly last night. The hostile helicopters flew over the villages of Markaba, Hula, Mays al-Jabal, Shaqra, Majdal Silm, Qabrikha, Bra'shit, Bayt Yahun, Srifa, Dirdghayya, Tulin, al-Ghanduriyah, Frun, the al-Litani river basin, Wadi al-Saluqi, 'Alman, and al-Shumariyah. The hostile helicopters raked the al-Litani River basin and Wadi al-Saluqi. The Islamic Resistance antiaircraft fire confronted the helicopters, forcing them to flee without achieving their goals.

The enemy artillery in al-Zaffatah and al-Tayyibah shelled the al-Litani river basin and al-Jabal al-Rafi' with approximately 50 155—mm shells at midnight. Last night, the Israeli forces in al-Dabshah and 'Ali al-Tahir posts fired on the al-Manzilah quarter in al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa with 12.7—mm machine guns.

Israeli Shelling, 'Resistance' Action

NC1612153495 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Jabal al-Rafi', al-Wadi al-Akhdar, the Nab' al-Tasah basin, the woods of Sujud and al-Rayhan, and the outskirts of Frun and al-Ghanduriyah are currently under bombardment from the Israeli occupation forces' positions in al-Zaffatah, al-'Ayshiyah, and Mashru' al-Tayyibah.

The resistance announced that it attacked the occupation forces position in al-Kafir at 0550 today using machine

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guns and rockets. A 12.7-mm machine-gun emplacement was destroyed and all post personnel were either killed or wounded.

The resistance also announced an attack on the 'Alman position, where violent clashes took place between the resistance and personnel defending the position. An occupation force vehicle was on fire.

'Resistance' Attacks Patrol

NC1612204095 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic resistance attacked an infantry patrol of the Israeli occupation forces near the Sujud position this afternoon, using machine guns and rockets. The attack took place as a group of the fire support unit targeted the Bi'r Kallab position using the appropriate weapons and inflicting several casualties on the personnel manning the post.

Mock Raids, Ground Fire

NC1812092895 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At 0900 today Israeli military aircraft carried out low-level flights and staged mock raids over the central and western sectors of southern Lebanon, including Sidon and Iqlim al-Tuffah. The enemy aircraft drew ground fire from the Lebanese Army.

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Christopher Announces 'Substantive Progress' in Talks

JN1512162195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the People's Palace at 1130 today. [passage omitted]

Talks dealt with the peace process and the developments that took place during the past days and weeks and their potential impact on the peace process. Christopher briefed his excellency the president on U.S. President Bill Clinton's talks with the Israeli prime minister in Washington. He also presented the ideas and views that were proposed by the Israeli prime minister. A discussion took place in this regard.

His excellency the president proposed Syrian ideas and views and stressed Syria's commitment to the peace process. Christopher commended Syria's efforts to advance the peace process. He said that he will carry the Syrian ideas and views to the other party.

In a statement to reporters following his talks with President Hafiz al-Asad, Warren Christopher said: I came here to brief His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad on the ideas and concepts that were expressed by Shim'on Peres during his talks with President Bill Clinton in Washington.

He added: I held positive and constructive talks with President Hafiz al-Asad. I will leave for Israel to review with Shim'on Peres tomorrow the ideas and concepts I am carrying. He noted: Based on the positive discussions I had today, I can say that the two parties clearly want to press ahead with the peace process. During the time left for me in the region, I will try to find the best means and avenues to make progress just as the concerned parties certainly want to do.

Answering a question on the nature of the ideas he carried to Damascus, he said: Nobody should believe that I will reveal in public the ideas the two parties exchanged at this stage. He said that he will divulge these ideas at the proper time.

Asked whether the Israelis accept the land-for-peace formula, he said: This kind of question touches on a substantive issue which I cannot comment on. I will leave it for the two concerned parties, however, we will try to help the two parties edge closer to each other.

Asked whether he was carrying from Damascus a formula for breaking the talks logjam following a 6-month hiatus, he said: I would rather announce this after meeting with Shim'on Peres and briefing him on my talks in Damascus. I hope I will discuss this issue before I depart the region.

He went on to say: We are working seriously to address the issues, especially since talks between the two parties are extremely important.

He added: Substantive progress has been made in my talks with President al-Asad today. I will meet with Shim'on Peres tomorrow and brief him on the results of my visit to Damascus. We will decide on the best means and ways of advancing the peace process after my meeting with Peres.

Asked whether he will return to Damascus during this tour, he said: This depends on the results of my meeting with Peres tomorrow.

Departs After 2-Day Visit

JN1512162795 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1600 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 15 Dec (SANA) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher left Damascus this evening following a two-day visit to the Syrian Arab Republic.

He was seen off at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', a number of Foreign Ministry officials, Syrian Ambassador in Washington Walid al-Mu'allim, U.S. Ambassador in Damascus Christopher Ross, and Embassy staff.

Radio Reports Christopher-Peres News Conference

JN1712073495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher last night announced that talks on the Syrian-Israeli track will resume near Washington on 27 December.

In a statement following his talks with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, Christopher said: In the name of President Hafiz al-Asad, President Bill Clinton, and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, it gives me pleasure to announce that talks between the Syrian and Israeli sides will resume in order to address the elements pertaining to peace.

He added that as of 27 December, a new phase of intensive talks will begin near Washington. The first round will last until 29 December, and it will include representatives from both sides. He said that the talks will be suspended for one week to enable the representatives of both sides to return to their capitals for consultations with their leaders.

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Christopher said: Talks will resume in the first week of January for three days, after which I will make another tour of the region, around 10 January, to discuss the results of talks with President Hafiz al-Asad and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and determine the next appropriate step with them.

Christopher added: Syria and Israel will receive full U.S. support. We are making these intensive and concentrated efforts to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

During a joint news conference with Peres, Christopher also said that talks on the Syrian track will differ from those held previously in terms of their comprehensive nature. The negotiators will discuss a new and large package of issues which differ in terms of their type and nature. He added that the negotiators on both sides enjoy the confidence of their governments.

Christopher pointed out that he will return to Washington today, Sunday, after holding talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Cairo.

On his part, Peres said that there is a great opportunity to achieve peace and end wars in the region. He added: There are real differences between Israel and Syria. We will try to give appropriate replies to them. Peres asserted that the negotiations with Syria will be held openly and without preconditions, and that each side will take into account the problems the other side is facing.

Replying to a question, Peres said that he will respect the wish of former Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin to hold a referendum on the Golan if needed, as he put it.

Regarding the negotiations with Lebanon, Peres said: I believe that the negotiations with Syria will also address the Lebanese track.

Damascus 'Cautiously Optimistic' After Talks

MM1812120095 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani: "Syrian Official Expresses to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Cautious Optimism About Resumption of Negotiations"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus — A Syrian official yesterday described the Syrian position, after the U.S.-Syrian talks aimed at reactivating the negotiations with Israel, as cautiously optimistic. The official told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Damascus expects U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to return there today or tomorrow at the latest to convey to senior Syrian officials specific answers from Israel defining its view of the future of the peace process through the proposals and ideas submitted by the two sides and the U.S. side. The official disclosed that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad presented new ideas during his talks with Christopher the day before yesterday, which will serve the peace process and safeguard the main foundations of this process and the Syrian national constants.

The official added that al-Asad encountered full understanding of the ideas from Christopher, who praised the policy pursued by President al-Asad regarding the peace process and the achievement of security and stability in the region.

The Syrian official pointed out that Damascus welcomed all the new facts that accompanied the U.S. move and which resulted in the positions that Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has announced, because Syria has from the outset been seeking peace and it was the Israeli side that obstructed the peace, since Syria's demands were legitimate, clear, and endorsed by the world.

The Syrian official pointed out that Christopher will carry the decision to reactivate the peace process in its correct framework and that Syria responded fully to the Israeli proposals conveyed to Damascus by Christopher, but there are some ideas that still need to be discussed. There are numerous matters that will remain subject to negotiation if the negotiations between Syria and Israel resume. [passage omitted]

'Positive' Mood Noted After Christopher Visit

JN1712152295 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Responsible sources say that the atmosphere in Damascus following Christopher's visit is as completely positive as it was before the U.S. secretary's tour. The sources said that this positivism was brought about by the serious U.S. efforts and Peres' Washington statements.

The responsible sources voiced satisfaction with the statement issued in Israel following Christopher's talks with Peres, particularly the point that the United States supports both Syria and Israel.

On whether there was final agreement on the basic topics, the responsible sources said that this is left to the negotiations which are not a goal in themselves and matters remain contingent on the course and results of these negotiations. The sources said that the Israelis who forge peace with Syria will enter history through wider doors than those who waged war with it, because the forging of peace, particularly with Syria, is far more

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difficult than waging war. The sources said: Perhaps, Shim'on Peres will be that person.

The sources denied that the resumption of the negotiations has taken place on the basis that Syria has given up its main demands for full withdrawal from the Golan and the rejection of early warning stations on the ground. The sources said: Is it logical that Syria gives up the basics of the peace process by which it had always abided?

Press Views Christopher's Tour, Syrian Stand

JN1712111095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, the newspaper TISHRIN discusses U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's announcement that peace talks on the Syrian track will resume on 27 December, after a six-month hiatus.

The paper says: At the end of his talks with President Hafiz al-Asad, Christopher said that he held constructive talks with al-Asad. This has clearly shown that Syria is eager to reach a just and comprehensive peace, and that it has never obstructed the peace process. Syria's response to the bases and components of the peace process continues to be the real stimulus for the efforts exerted to establish peace on firm and solid bases.

TISHRIN adds: Christopher's appreciation of Syria's role and of its sincere previous efforts to promote the peace process was only due to Syria's clear and definite adherence to the peace process. No doubt, giving the required impetus to the negotiations under U.S. sponsorship and participation first needs a balanced and objective Israeli position which responds to the bases and components of a just and comprehensive peace.

Concluding, the paper asserts that the achievement of peace needs practical Israeli positions and full Israeli commitment to all that is stipulated by the resolutions of international legitimacy. It is necessary not to waste the opportunity of resuming the talks. This is a real possibility to make a just and comprehensive peace. It is also necessary to seriously contribute to making these talks achieve their sought objectives, so the region—after the occupation ends—will enter a new era of stability, security, and prosperity.

In its editorial, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH discusses the same topic. It says: The announcement on resuming the Syrian-Israeli talks in Washington has given peace a new and important opportunity, so the peace process can proceed toward the sought objective in terms of building a just and comprehensive peace and achieving regional security and stability in the interest of all peoples in the region and the world.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The resumption of talks is a positive step in the peace march. However, the final assessment of results depends on the Israeli side and on the proposals and ideas it will present and how close to, or far from, the bases of peace they are.

The paper says: For the peace process to proceed with a momentum reviving the hopes for real progress and removing the cautious optimism and turning it into tangible reality, real changes must be made in the Israeli positions, so they will not be oral changes but practical changes in order to address the peace efforts and respond to the peace requirements. These requirements are represented by total Israeli withdrawal.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Only this will reopen the road toward the objective of achieving a just and comprehensive peace. Such peace will establish security and end the state of war and tension in the region in a way that will return the land and rights to their owners and preserve the interests and dignity of all under evenness [al- ta'adul], equitability [al-takafu'], and equality [al-tasawi] and without any attempt to undermine the principle of full sovereignty over the Syrian and Lebanese national territories.

The paper asserts that Syria, which adheres to its national and pan-Arab constants, sees no alternative to regaining the entire Golan, to full Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, and to Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 line. Syria rejects the presence of any symbol or trace of Israeli occupation.

In its editorial, the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: No doubt, the announcement by the head of U.S. diplomacy that talks will resume on the Syrian track has revived the hopes for promoting the peace process and refreshed the international desire to reach a just and comprehensive peace. Such peace will achieve security and stability while ending the state of deep dormancy. The peace process has entered this state since the exchange of views between the Syrian and Israeli chiefs of staff in Washington six months ago. Following this exchange of views, Israel announced impossible terms which dealt a blow to the very bases and principles of the peace process.

AL-BA'TH adds: While welcoming the efforts U.S. diplomacy is undertaking, as well as the Clinton administration's determination to play an effective and active role to push the peace process toward its sought objective, we fear, among other things, that Israel will go back on this historic opportunity. Syria has contributed

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to providing this opportunity based on the constants in which it believes and on what Syria seeks, as part of its strategic option, in terms of achieving a real peace. The peace initiative was based on achieving a real peace.

The paper continues: Syria has its own justifications. This is so because more than four years have passed since the Madrid conference convened, and we have only viewed this period as a waste of time which could have been optimally exploited had Israel declared from the outset that it was committed to the peace initiative and ready to meet the requirements of the peace process.

Papers: Resumption of Talks 'Good Step Forward'

JN1812075295 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 18 Dec 94

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Peace Is Security," TISHRIN says: The United States has played an important role in the resumption of Syrian-Israeli peace talks after a six-month hiatus. The U.S. Administration's assertions about the importance of Syria and about advancing the Syrian and Lebanese tracks have invigorated the climate of peace in the region.

TISHRIN adds: Undoubtedly the resumption of talks in Washington is a good step forward. The talks will cover all the necessary elements, primarily withdrawal, peace, and security. It is important to make up for wasted time and effort over the past years. This requires a sincere and objective Israeli response to the Security Council resolutions and the foundations of the peace process in order to translate international resolutions into action.

The newspaper notes the whole world has acknowledged the impossibility of achieving peace while occupation continues on the Golan and in southern Lebanon. The land-for-peace principle can end tension and the war threat in the region. The peace-for-peace formula, advocated by the Likud chief, is now defunct. This formula has proven useless.

The newspaper adds: A just and firm peace is the best guarantee of security. Security arrangements will enhance peace, but they are not a substitute for it. Therefore, Syria adheres to its position and constant principles. What is required is the achievement of peace, and not a truce. Peace means a new climate in the region and putting things right.

TISHRIN concludes: There is no question that accelerating the Washington talks and translating them into action on the ground will give a big push to the peace process and open all doors.

AL-BA'TH asserts that resuming the talks is a new opportunity that should be dealt with seriously so that the peace process can follow its proper course. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has announced that the talks will resume on 27 December near Washington. For its part, the Syrian side has provided an atmosphere conducive to making progress to reach a just and comprehensive peace. This is especially so since the Syrian position has been very clear and precise. Syria said yes to full withdrawal in return for full peace. This clear Syrian stance on the peace process means that peace is Syria's strategic option and that implementing the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle is a major, objective condition for the success of the peace process. Syria did not ask Israel to take a stand that conflicts with international legitimacy. Syria said time and again that Israel must clearly announce its commitment to the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy as a primary condition that must be met if the peace process is to proceed on its proper course.

The newspaper concludes that Israel's commitmen. to the conditions and requirements of a just and comprehensive peace will unquestionably push the peace process forward. This means opening the door to the possibility of a real peace that restores rights and provides peace, security, and stability for everyone.

Radio: Resumption of Talks 'New Breakthrough'

JN1712173695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: There is no doubt that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's announcement that talks on the Syrian-Israeli track will resume in a Washington suburb is a new breakthrough in the peace process, which has been halted for six months. This breakthrough, on which many hopes are pinned, can be realized if it is in line with the practical and logical bases of the peace process. These include adherence to the international legitimacy resolutions and finding a solution to a deep and bloody conflict that has continued for nearly half a century. The necessary requirements to achieve this are represented by land in return for peace, Israel's full withdrawal from the occupied territories to the 4 June 1967 borders and from southern Lebanon to the 1978 borders, the achievement of parallel [mutawziyah], balanced [mutawazinah], and equal [mutasawiyah] security arrangements, in addition to the desired just and comprehensive peace in the region, which today is in dire need of such a peace.

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From this premise, we must protect this breakthrough from the well-known causes of failure, from anything that could obstruct its continuation, and from any circumvention of its facts and constants, which constitute its best immunity. Peace is in the interest of everyone from all directions and parties, and hopes are pinned on the desired results of this breakthrough. That is, unless the policies of planting mines and obstacles and placing preconditions surface again.

We are not stating anything new when we says that abandoning the facts and bases of peace, circumventing international legitimacy and its resolutions, and deviating from the path of peace do not at all serve peace. On the contrary, such actions harm it. Experience has proved the credibility of what we are cautioning against. We repeatedly avoided such actions out of concern for the credibility of hopes and optimism, which prevailed for some time and then disappeared, and are now resurfacing.

Therefore, concern for the peace process and its continuation and the achievement of its desired objective requires unanimous concern, determination, and adherence to the constants, bases, and guarantees that were the basis for launching the peace process, and which are now contributing to pushing it forward.

Syria, which made peace its strategic option, links lasting and comprehensive peace to conduct, practice, and performance, in which the Syrian stand has become the criteria for credibility and a headline for faithfulness, commitment, and seriousness. Syria is today paving the way for a new and important opportunity, hoping that others will deal with the essence of peace with the same credibility, faithfulness, and vigor. Only then will opportunities be repeated and the desired just peace be achieved. Otherwise, it will all be a waste of time and effort.

Radio Urges U.S. To Commit Israel to Peace

JN1512154195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 15 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] With great concern and cautious optimism, Arab and international circles are awaiting the outcome of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region aimed to advance the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. Secretary Christopher, who arrived in Damascus last night, will hold talks with President Hafiz al-Asad today. He will brief President al-Asad on the latest Israeli ideas and proposals for resuming the stalled talks. Then, he will leave for Tel Aviv carrying the Syrian responses. He might pay another visit to Damascus before he returns to the United States.

Undoubtedly, the new U.S. endeavor is important. It will even be more important as far as there is a real change in the Israeli position and a sound and direct response to the Security Council resolutions which regulate the peace process. As everybody knows, Syria can never carry favor with any party vis-a-vis a basic and serious issue pertinent to the higher interest of its people, that is, full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and the return of the Israeli occupation troops to the 4 June 1967 lines. The removal of the Israeli occupation from every inch of the Golan is an issue that can never be up for discussion, contested, or bargained over given that it pertains to sovereignty and dignity. Syria is keen on its sovereignty and dignity. Whoever fails to realize this is ignorant of Syria and the Syrians, who confronted all types of invasion throughout history, and bowed to none.

Given that Israel attaches great importance to security arrangements, Syria agreed to discuss working out arrangements to the satisfaction of both parties — arrangements that should be even and equitable [muta'adilah wa mutakafi'ah]. However, it should be noted that a just and comprehensive peace is the optimal guarantee for security and Israel's fears are exaggerated and unjustified, given it possesses a great arsenal of weapons. This fact makes security a more pressing need for Syria and the Arabs than for Israel.

Observers agree that advancing the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks is contingent on Israel and on the actual readiness it shows to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy. Syria proposed before all at the recent Barcelona conference the formula of full peace supported with appropriate security arrangements in return for full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. Syria cannot offer anything beyond this.

Peace in the final analysis is the higher objective of peoples. If peace is more important than elections, as Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said, then it is certainly more important than occupying a portion of land here or there.

Perhaps Israel's rulers should be frank with their people and state that peace is far more important than occupation and that peace and occupation can never coexist. Occupation is an endless source of tension, violence, and tribulation and a dangerous mine that impedes and threatens the march of peace. Hence, all Israeli proposals that would lead to full withdrawal from the Golan will inevitably be welcomed, because they will establish peace at the same time. Undoubtedly, the United States

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can contribute to effecting the aspired Israeli shift toward a real commitment to peace and its requirements, especially since it sensed the spiraling extremism in Israel and the negative repercussions of extremism on the entire peace process in the region.

Damascus Awaiting Israeli Commitment to Withdrawal

JN1612112995 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus today reiterated its call on Israel to make a frank and clear commitment to withdraw from occupied Golan. The SYRIA TIMES adds that Damascus is awaiting Israel's approval of the principle of withdrawal so that the peace talks will achieve their objective.

Press Demands Israeli Commitment to Withdrawal

JN1612082895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper TISHRIN today editorializes on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region, and his peace process talks, saying: The peace process has begun to witness dynamic moves following a hiatus of several months, which was no fault of Syria's. For — as has become clear to all — Syria has honestly and responsibly done its best to render the U.S. initiative a success, because it believes in the sanctity of peace, and also in the need to pull the region out of the vicious cycle of war and conflicts.

TISHRIN adds: Syria has repeatedly called for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace that would end all manifestations of injustice and oppression, and return rights and territories to their owners. Syria has underlined the need for a just and comprehensive peace. This is because failing that, it will be difficult to remove animosity and hatred and promote a climate of relaxation and trust.

TISHRIN goes on to say: Syria has declared that a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon and a pullback by the Israeli occupation troops to the 4 June 1967 borders would show a credible Israeli stand in favor of peace. Syria has also supported the honest efforts of the U.S. Administration and other international parties to achieve a just, firm, durable, and comprehensive peace. Syria has never ever set conditions for the achievement of peace. It has said only that any peace deal must uphold international legitimacy, the principles of the Madrid conference, and the land-for-peace formula. It has never ever hindered progress in the peace process. It was Israeli intransigence and reluctance during the reign of the Rabin government that ground the peace talks to a halt on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations.

TISHRIN says: If the new Israeli Government under Shim'on Peres wants to save time and effort, there is no alternative to an in-depth handling of the overall outstanding issues and problems, chief among which is complete Israeli withdrawal. In a statement to the newspaper MA'ARIV yesterday, the Israeli prime minister said he had no doubt that Israel will have to pay a full price for full peace with Syria. Otherwise, there will be no peace at all.

TISHRIN concludes by saying: What is important is to translate words into deeds. Syrians look forward to the day on which the Golan will be restored to the homeland, on which the displaced Golan citizens will come home, on which the national flag will flutter there, and on which all traces of occupation will be eliminated.

Under the headline "The Key to Peace," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH also addresses the tour of the region by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the peace process talks he held with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad during their meeting yesterday. During that meeting, the two discussed the peace process and the developments that surfaced during the past days and weeks as well as their potential impact on the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Based on the fact that Syria's adherence to the peace process in accordance with the Madrid formula, its eagerness to press ahead with this process, and its serious approach to advance this process to allow it to achieve a just and comprehensive peace are known to all, particularly to the U.S. sponsor, the other side; namely, Israel is required to declare its commitment to the components of such peace, particularly the land-for-peace formula, and to meet its requirements, chief among which are complete withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon, pullback to the 4 June 1967 borders, and the establishment of balanced [mutawazinah] and equal [mutasawiyah] security arrangements on both sides of these boruers.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Prior to his departure from Damascus yesterday, Warren Christopher said that substantive progress was made in his talks with President al-Asad. Consequently, those concerned about and interested in regional affairs have expected that the tour of the U.S. secretary of state will produce new developments regarding the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations; however, for these expectations to materialize, the Israeli side is required to clearly and unequivocally declare, first and foremost, a willingness to withdraw from the Golan and southern

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Lebanon. This is because the restoration of the territories in full is the key to true peace.

Radio Reiterates 'Total Withdrawal for Total Peace'

JN1612161395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: We were not surprised when U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher lauded Syria's serious effort to push the peace process forward and when he described his talks with President Hafiz al-Asad as constructive. In each decisive turning point in the long march of peace, which is now witnessing such a turning point, the U.S. Administration knew well that Syria adhered to the essence of peace in harmony with international legitimacy and consensus and the U.S. initiative itself.

Syria, which calls for peace as a strategic option, is working for that peace without ambiguity, oneupmanship, or relinquishment. It also commits itself to implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions while abiding by what it says and what it believes to be true. Syria is also ready to translate its words into deeds as soon as Israel commits itself to the principle of a total withdrawal by taking tangible steps toward withdrawing its forces and its settlers and removing its settlements and all the repercussions of the 5 June 1967 aggression.

Unless Israel abandons its tough and negative position, which it has maintained throughout the past period of the peace process; unless it actually begins to consider the requirements of peace and responds to the Security Council's resolutions; and unless it accepts the principle of a total withdrawal for total peace, the peace process will continue to revolve in a vicious circle.

The desired progress in the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks can be achieved only if Israel deals with the peace efforts seriously by making realistic shifts in its positions, reflecting a sense of responsibility, and undertaking realistic, tangible efforts that will indicate commitment to meeting the requirements of peace, foremost of which are a total withdrawal from occupied southern Lebanon and Golan and acceptance of parallel, equal, and reciprocal [mutawaziyah, wa mutasawiyah, wa mutaqabilah] security arrangements on both sides of the 4 June 1967 line.

As we are waiting for new clear signals in the active U.S. diplomatic move, we can say that the final picture of Israel's true positions will be clarified by what Israel will do and offer when its credibility is tested. If Israel succeeds in this test, the U.S. efforts will succeed in saving the peace process from its crisis and the peace talks will overcome their obstacles, bridge the gaps, and start to build just and comprehensive peace, which the region's peoples and the world are cherishing as a great goal and a true beginning of security and stability that will eliminate all the factors of the conflict and its repercussions, including the removal of occupation and the state of aggression, preserving everybody's interests and dignity, and restoring rights.

'Dramatic Change' in Israel's Position Reported

JN1812140495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Occupied Palestine — Israeli radio today said Israel is ready to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan over a short period of time and without long intervals between the phases of withdrawal.

Israeli radio cited a senior Israeli political source — AFP says he is Shim'on Peres — as saying Israel is ready to set an intensive timetable to reach a peace agreement with Syria. The radio added that Peres also expressed readiness to withdraw Israeli forces from the Golan faster than was desired by his predecessor, Yitzhaq Rabin, and that Peres is ready to cut short the duration of withdrawal.

The radio also pointed out that the United States has been notified of Israel's readiness to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan, and that this is a dramatic change in Israel's previous position on withdrawal from the Golan.

Moreover, the radio asserted that preparations have begun in Israel for talks with Syria, which will resume near Washington on 27 December.

Radio Urges Seizing Regional Peace Opportunity

JN1812160495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1234 GMT 18 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The resumption of Syrian-Israeli negotiations under U.S. sponsorship may be important, especially after the long dormancy in the peace process which lasted more than six months.

No doubt, however, the resumption of negotiations does not derive its importance from being an end in itself but from the belief in the possibility that positive signs may be shown. These signs will give momentum to the peace process in the right direction, which will lead to real peace. This is particularly true after the new

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language spoken by the Israeli prime minister which was not spoken before.

It is now clear that peace cannot be real at all unless it is established on the firm basis of justice and on the strong foundations of rights. Peace cannot last unless it manages to remove the feelings of injustice and bitterness.

From this premise, it can be said that the future of the peace process in the region depends on Israel's readiness to translate words into deeds and on Israel's definite resolve to implement the remarks made by the Israeli prime minister. No doubt, showing a desire for peace, though important, is not sufficient to establish peace unless it is coupled with determination to do so.

We do not believe that some people are unaware of the fact that Syria has made no room for casting doubts on its true determination to proceed on the path of peace and to remove any obstacle to this path in order to achieve the sought objective. This emanates from Syria's belief in the role of peace in making progress and development and creating a healthy atmosphere to employ peoples' resources for their own good and prosperity and for their future generations.

Hence, the resumption of negotiations is a touchstone designed to test Israel's credibility and determination to proceed with the new opportunity to lay the bases of a balanced [mutawazin] and equitable [mutakafi'] peace which will give everyone his due, preserve everyone's dignity and interests, and carry the elements of survival, continuity, and perpetuity.

It goes without saying that many opportunities were wasted before due to Israel's intransigence and adherence to positions which, in their entirety entrenched the effects of aggression and denied Syria's right to liberate all its territory and control every inch of its national soil.

Many opportunities were wasted throughout the past four years. Each of these opportunities should have been sufficient to lay the bases of real peace if Israel seized them and showed true readiness to respect the will of the international community and to implement Security Council resolutions 242, 338, and 425, and also if it accepted the land-for-peace principle in accordance with the U.S. initiative.

There is now a new opportunity; and there is an atmosphere of belief in the possibility of seizing and preserving this opportunity, so it should not be wasted like many previous opportunities.

Most MB Prisoners Reportedly Released

JN1712191695 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Thana' al-Imam dispatch from Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to information made available to Radio Monte Carlo, not more than 20 Muslim Brotherhood [MB] prisoners remain in Syrian jails. This follows the release of another group of Muslim Brotherhood members and communists affiliated with the Riyad al-Turk group who were in coalition with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Syria has released more than 1,000 Muslim Brotherhood political prisoners in the first group of prisoners to be released on the 25th anniversary of the Corrective Movement. These prisoners carried out acts of riot and sabotage against public security in the early 1980's under the name of banned organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood group. These acts included the explosion in al-Azbakiyah neighborhood in Damascus which left scores of innocent Syrian victims.

The general amnesty law which applies to most crimes committed before 16 November 1995, issued by President Hafiz al-Asad, was referred to the Syrian People's Assembly. The Assembly will study that law today.

Official sources stress that this amnesty will also apply to all those detained under Law No. 24, issued in the late 1980's and which concerns the illegal trading in currencies and attempts to smuggle them abroad.

It is worth recalling that a number of Muslim Brotherhood members who fled Syria have returned home following special pardons by the government. The most prominent of these was 'Abd-al-Fattah Abu- Ghuddah, former secretary general of the Muslim Brotherhood group.

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Afghanistan

Rabbani on 'Conspiracies of Foreign Circles'

LD1612215495 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, today received elders, religious scholars, and commanders of the Momand tribe from Batikot district [Nangrahar province] [words indistinct].

The presidential press office reports that during the meeting the president recalled with gratitude the Momand tribe's bravery and heroism during the jihad days. He described their readiness to serve the country and the Islamic regime as considerable. President Rabbani said: Afghanistan is the common home of all its gallant citizens. All the country's tribes and national groups have contributed to the safeguarding of its historic heritage and national values. The president added: Those who feared a strong and victorious Afghanistan [words indistinct] have tried to prevent the consolidation of the Islamic state. The open and blatant conspiracies of foreign circles against Afghanistan, which have now become clear to all our compatriots and to the world, are a clear manifestation of foreign interference in the internal affairs of our country. He added: As the Afghan people have united to defend their country throughout history, surely they will, jointly with their Islamic government, give a resolute and crushing response to any other aggressor. Examples of this can be seen in the resistance of the Muslim nation of Afghanistan to the interfering countries. [passage omitted]

Hekmatyar on 'Imperialist' Designs Against Islam

LD1612215995 Tehran IRNA in English 1702 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 16, IRNA — Leader of Afghanistan Islamic Party [Hezb-e Eslami], Golboddin Hekmatyar, accused imperialist powers of persisting in plotting against the world of Islam and Islamic movements.

He made the statement in the Friday prayer sermons he delivered at Sarobi grand mosque 60 kilometers east of Kabul, where he said the global blasphemy have joined hands against Muslims and want to make the world of Islam subservient to them. Hekmatyar labeled the leaders of most Islamic countries as slaves and mercenaries of imperialists who are used to inflict blows at Islamic movements.

The Afghan Islamic Party leader noted that despite all these plots the current century is the century of the grandeur of Islam, adding that in this gloomy age, the sun of Islam is rising, inspiring a fresh hope into the world of Islam.

Hekmatyar criticized the continued crisis in Afghanistan and maintained that the realities and bitter wars in recent years in Afghanistan indicated that "we do not deserve having an Islamic government", because the leaders of Afghanistan follow the aliens and consider themselves superior to people.

Hekmatyar Calls For End to Kabul Siege

LD1612154995 Tehran IRNA in Persian 1345 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kabul, 16 December — Afghanistan's Hezb-e Eslami [the Islamic party], led by Golboddin Hekmatyar, has called on all Afghan warring factions to open all roads leading to Kabul and end the city's siege, so as to reduce the economic pressures on the inhabitants of the capital, Afghan Radio Message of Freedom, which belongs to Hezb-e Eslami, reported on Saturday [16 December].

The radio said that the party's executive committee had announced after a meeting that the plight of the Kabul inhabitants was a problem for all Afghan people, and that a fundamental solution must be found to the city's siege so that the supply of food and heating fuel may be resumed.

The executive committee has also asked all the Jihadi groups of Afghanistan to opt for a peaceful settlement to the country's ongoing crisis and make efforts to establish a government in Afghanistan which is acceptable to all factions. [passage omitted]

Government-Taleban Clashes in Kabul Area Continue

Rocket Fire Kills 3

LD1612144995 Tehran IRNA in Persian 1400 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kabul, 16 December — Three people have been killed and four others wounded during the last 24 hours as a result of ten rockets and a number of long-range artillery shells hitting the residential areas of Kabul.

A source in the press office of the Afghan Defense Ministry today announced the above news and said: a number of houses in Kabul have been damaged as a result of the attacks.

The source added: the rockets were fired from Taleban positions south of Kabul and targeted the Shahed-Shahid area near the Maranjan Heights southeast of the capital.

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During the last two months, the Taleban have fired thousands of rockets and shells at Kabul, killing more than 1,000 people and destroying hundreds of houses.

Mosque Hit by Rocket Fire

LD1712171695 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Benazir Bhutto's Taleban bombarded the city of Kabul today. The Pol-e Kheshti Grand Mosque was one of this hireling groups' targets. A BAKHTAR correspondent reports that Benazir Bhutto's Taleban savagely targeted the residential areas of the city at noon today. As a result of this savage attack, 12 Kabul residents were martyred and 15 others injured.

The Pol-e Kheshti mosque was hit by two rockets while a great congregation of Kabul citizens were saying their afternoon prayers. The rockets martyred five worshipers and injured 10 others. The Taleban targeted a holy place and martyred or injured a number of people there. As a consequence of today's rocket attack on the mosque much material damage was also caused.

A worshiper, who witnessed the incident, said: This is not the act of Muslims. This is not the act of Afghans. This act does not comply with any religion or belief. The so-called hireling Taleban are neither Muslims nor Afghans. They deliberately bombard mosques and residential areas and as a reward receive rupees and dollars. The end of these hirelings will be misery and shame.

The report adds that last night, too, Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired rockets into the residential areas of Kabul city. Forty-eight rockets were fired into Dasht-e Barchi, Qala-e Shada, Dehbori, Mahtab Qala, Karta-e Char, Dehmazang, Allauddin, and into other residential areas. As a result three residents of the areas were martyred and 70 others injured.

More on Mosque Attack

BK1712114095 Hong Kong AFP in English 1101 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec 17 (AFP) — Eight people, mostly civilians, were killed and seven wounded when the Taleban militia Sunday [17 December] fired a salvo of rockets on Kabul, witnesses and military sources said.

Sunday's barrage came less than a day after four civilians were killed and nine others wounded in another rocket onslaught in the south of Kabul.

In the latest raid, four worshipers at a city centre mosque were killed when a rocket struck the building's courtyard at Muslim prayer time, spraying the area with shards of jagged metal, witnesses said. They added that a fifth man was killed by another rocket as he shopped in the nearby bazaar.

Just a few hundred meters (yards) away, three people died when one of about nine other rockets hit their car in the city centre area which houses the presidential palace and the Ministry of Defence, witnesses said.

"The people killed in the mosque were just praying that peace would come to Afghanistan," Nake Mohammed, the local interior ministry commander in charge of the area told AFP.

"Now they're dead and it doesn't matter to them any more — all their suffering was for nothing because the Taleban are hurting civilians," he added angrily after witnessing the attack.

No independent reports were available of who was responsible for the latest attack in the zone which has several offical buildings.

Stall holders in the normally bustling market area packed up what they could of their goods after the first rockets struck and cowered in storm drains and manholes fearing another deadly barrage.

Local residents, used to regular bombardments, meanwhile picked up the dead and unceremoniously dumped them in the boots of taxis so they could be taken to their families. The seven injured were rushed to the city's hospitals for treatment, doctors said.

The four men killed Saturday fell victim to two rockets from a salvo of about 17 landed near a packed mini bus in the city's southern suburbs, witnesses at the scene said. Two of the wounded were soldiers, they said.

All the injured were on or near the bus, which was travelling on the main road towards Kabul city centre, they added.

"I saw two rockets tear the bus apart and heard screaming coming from the survivors," Atiqullah, who tends a vegetable stall in the area said.

"I went to help the injured — it was terrible, they were badly cut up and some were missing limbs."

The area affected by Saturday's salvo contains a military command post and has been largely abandoned by civilian residents since heavy fighting broke out in the neighbourhood last year.

An Afghan Government forces frontline commander at nearby Rishkhor, about five kilometers (three miles) south of where the rockets struck, accused the Taleban

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of launching the barrage during a firefight with presidential troops. The charge could not be independently verified.

"There was fighting with rockets, mortars and artillery which lasted into the night," the commander told AFP.

He added that the frontlines at Rishkhor, one of three fronts on which the Taleban are besieging the city, had not changed in the routine skirmish, which defence officals said was triggered when the Taleban attempted to resupply their troops on the front.

Rocket barrages have once again become an almost daily occurrence in Kabul since the Islamic fighters arrived on the outskirts of the city in mid-October.

The beleaguered government of President Borhanoddin Rabbani routinely blames the militiamen for rocket, artillery and bomb attacks, which killed more than 112 people here in November.

The Taleban, who have vowed to topple the Kabul administration and install Islamic law across war-torn Afghanistan, have claimed responsibility for some of the bombing raids, but have denied targetting civilians and residential areas.

Civilian Casualties Mount

LD1812105095 Tehran IRNA in English 0853 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 18, IRNA — About 27 civilians were injured or killed when the besieged Afghan capital yesterday came under renewed rocket attack by the Taleban militia.

A security commission source in Kabul said last night that the central as well as the eastern parts of the Afghan capital were subjected to heavy attack with the Taleban troops raining at least eleven rockets on the city. According to the source, two of the rockets hit the Pol-e Kheshti mosque, the biggest mosque in Kabul, killing five worshippers and wounding ten others. A portion of the mosque was also destroyed in the attack, added the source.

The security commission of Kabul further reported that the Taleban on Saturday [16 December] night pounded the Dasht-e Parchi, Kart-e Nu, Qala'-ye Shahada, Deh Bori and Deh Maznag regions in southern and western Kabul, firing 48 Katyusha rockets which led to the death of four persons and injuries to another 12.

Taking position in the south and southwest of the capital during the past two months, the Taleban have launched air and land attacks on Kabul, killing or wounding over 1,000 civilians and destroying scores of residences.

Government Forces Attack Taleban

LD1712174795 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night the Islamic army forces heavily attacked the Taleban concentrations and fortifications. The attack was mounted while the Taleban were planning to launch an offensive. Quoting Ministry of Defense sources, BAKHTAR reported to us that last night the hireling Taleban planned to mount an offensive from the directions of Kowt-e 'Ashrow and Rish Khvor where, as a result of the heavy and precise artillery fire of artillery units, their plan was neutralized, and heavy loss of life and material was inflicted on them. The heavy weapons exchange lasted for two hours.

An enemy convoy that was on its way to Chahar Asiab from Lowgar Velayat-e was forced to retreat. It is said that two vehicles of the convoy were set ablaze.

India

Spokesman Denies Plans for Nuclear Testing

BK1512154995 Delhi ISI Diplomatic Information Service in English 1520 GMT 15 Dec 95

["Official Spokesman's Statement" — ISI headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Responding to a query pertaining to NEW YORK TIMES report saying that American intelligence experts suspect that India is preparing for its first nuclear test since 1974, the spokesman said that the report was highly speculative. He clarified that the area which is mentioned in the report is an area where routine military exercises are carried out. He further said that it is a routine military activity in border area. Such exercises, he said, were common. To all confirm or deny the report, the spokesman said there was nothing to confirm or deny as the report was speculative. For example the spokesman pointed out that in para 3 of the news item, intelligence experts of USA are quoted as not being able to tell whether the activity involved preparation for exploding a nuclear bomb.

In reply to a question regarding the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty], the spokesman said that India's position was well known. He said that India was for the elimination of all nuclear weapons in a specified timeframe as contained in the Rajiv Gandhi action plan.

In response to a question regarding India's nuclear capability, the spokesman said that India has the capability but believes in its use for peaceful purpose only.

In response to yet another question as to why India carried out a nuclear explosion in 1974, the spokesman said that this particular explosion was for peaceful

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purposes and increased our knowledge about peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In response to another question regarding Pakistan's nuclear capability, the spokesman said that the former prime minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, and their former chief of staff had already said in public that Pakistan possessed the bomb. Leaders of that stature had already declared that Pakistan has the bomb. What further proof was necessary? said the spokesman.

Asked to comment on India's stand on CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty], the spokesman said that we are looking at it and watching how the negotiations are developing. The discussions were not complete as yet.

New Delhi
[Dated] Date 15.12.95

More on Denial

BK1512131595 Hong Kong AFP in English 1257 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Dec 15 (AFP) — India dismissed as "highly speculative" on Friday [15 December] a US newspaper report suggesting that the country was making preparations for its first nuclear test in more than two decades.

The New York Times, in a dispatch from Washington citing US intelligence experts, reported Friday that spy satellites had recorded scientific and technical activity at India's Pokhran nuclear test site in recent weeks.

It quoted the experts as saying they could not tell whether the activity at the test site in the state of Rajasthan involved preparations for exploding a nuclear bomb or some other experiment to increase India's expertise in making nuclear weapons.

"We're not sure what they are up to," the Times quoted an unidentified official as saying.

"If their motive is to get scientific knowledge, it might be months or years before they do the test," the official reportedly said. "If it's for purely political reasons it could be this weekend."

The newspaper said the United States was trying to discourage India from carrying out a nuclear test.

Asked about the report, an Indian external affairs spokesman here expressed surprise that a newspaper such as the New York Times would run such a "highly speculative" report.

The spokesman added that the Indian army staged routine exercises in the area whether the unusual scientific and technical activity had reportedly been monitored.

India exploded a nuclear device at Pokhran in 1974 but denies possessing nuclear weapons.

The Times said India's ruling Congress (I) party could be contemplating staging a nuclear test to boost its domestic political standing.

It said there were fears in Washington that a test by India would put pressure on Pakistan to follow suit.

Like India, Pakistan also denies possessing nuclear weapons. Neither country is a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The South Asian rivals have fought three wars since independence in 1947.

Nuclear Test Report Said 'Planted' by U.S.

BK1812162295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has conveyed to China its concern over external assistance to Pakistan for stepping up its military capabilities beyond its legitimate requirements. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, the minister of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, said the government is aware of the reported secret transfer of an American-built F-16 fighter aircraft by Pakistan to China. Extensive cooperation between Islamabad and Beijing in the field of defense, including transfer of sophisticated missiles and technology to Pakistan, has also been noticed. The minister added that during bilateral interactions with the United States, India drew Washington's attention to the military cooperation between Pakistan and China. In reply to another question, Mr. Bhatia said India is actively participating in the ongoing negotiations in Geneva for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It is expected to be concluded next year.

Meanwhile, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] has said that the NEW YORK TIMES report alleging that India is preparing for nuclear test is planted deliberately by the U.S. Government. The party leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, in a press release in New Delhi today asserted that a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is possible only with total global disarmament.

U.S. Criticized for Warnings on Nuclear Testing

BK1712133795 Hong Kong AFP in English 0922 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Dec 17 (AFP) — Indian opposition parties on Sunday [17 December] flayed the United States for warning India that any nuclear test carried out by India could harm efforts to effect a nuclear test ban treaty.

The Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) said the U.S. warning was a

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"ploy" by Washington to "coerce" India into accepting the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The Indian Government on Friday dismissed reports in THE NEW YORK TIMES of increased activity at India's Pokran nuclear test site as "highly speculative," but the country's ruling Congress (I) party declined to comment on the issue, which has snowballed into a controversy here.

THE TIMES, citing U.S. intelligence experts, reported on Friday that spy satellites had recorded scientific and technical activity at the Pokhran site in recent weeks.

It quoted the unnamed experts as saying they could not determine whether the activity at the test site involved preparations for exploding an atom bomb or some other experiment to increase India's expertise in making nuclear weapons.

THE WASHINGTON POST carried a similar report a day later.

The reports prompted Washington to warn that any nuclear test by India could "tip the regional balance and doom prospects for a global test ban treaty."

Indian Atomic Commission Chairman R. Chidambaram described the TIMES report as "irresponsible."

"Being a scientist, I would not like to respond to every irresponsible utterance coming from that country (the United States)," Chidambaram was quoted as saying in comments published in a local newspaper on Sunday.

The BJP, India's main opposition party, called on Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's government to give a "strong rebuff to any attempt at arm-twisting" by the United States.

"India is not a colony to be bent or threatened into submission," said BJP leader Jaswant Singh and asked the government to move a resolution in parliament to "strengthen India's nuclear policies."

The centrist Janata Dal (People's Party) said India should not sign the test ban treaty. "This is a question of national security on which there must not be any pressure," party leader Sharad Yadav said.

Added Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Prakash Karat: "This is part of the sustained pressure the United States has been exerting to make India give up its independent stand on the nuclear question."

"The government must resist this," the Marxist leader added.

India exploded a nuclear device in the Pokhran desert in 1974 but denies possessing nuclear weapons.

THE TIMES said the ruling Congress (I) party could be contemplating staging a nuclear test to boost its domestic political standing ahead of next year's crucial parliamentary elections.

Like India, Pakistan also denies possessing nuclear weapons. Neither country is a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The south Asian rivals have fought three wars since independence in 1947.

A survey conducted by the leading news magazine INDIA TODAY, meanwhile, said more than 50 percent of some 2,000 respondents supported a second nuclear test by India, the Press Trust of India news agency reported Sunday.

Government Urged Not To Bow to U.S. 'Pressure'

BK1812145695 Hong Kong AFP in English 1247 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI Dec 18 (AFP) — The leader of India's main opposition party urged the government on Monday [18 December] to articulate a clear nuclear policy and not to bow to U.S. pressure.

Atal Behari Vajpayee, leader of the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), said a U.S. press report that India was planning a nuclear test was a "plant" by the U.S. State Department.

THE NEW YORK TIMES reported last week that spy satellites have observed preparations for a nuclear test at India's nuclear test site in the desert state of Rajasthan.

The Indian Government dismissed the report in THE NEW YORK TIMES as "highly speculative" while a White House spokesman said "such a test would be a very bad idea."

Vajpayee told reporters that the TIMES story "was a deliberate plant of the U.S. State Department with a view to diverting attention from U.S. arms supplies to Pakistan.

"It is also intended to pressurise India, particularly in light of the ongoing conference on disarmament and negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty," he said.

Vajpayee, whose Hindu nationalist party advocates a nuclear arsenal for India, urged the government to resist U.S. pressure and agree to the adoption of a unanimous parliamentary resolution on India's nuclear policy.

India conducted a nuclear test in 1974 but says its nuclear program is geared entirely to peaceful purposes.

Vajpayee said India had every right to pursue its own nuclear policy.

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"We do not accept any concept of nuclear apartheid," he said. "It is our sovereign right, indeed our duty, to take all such actions as are necessary for India's security."

Both India and Pakistan are suspected of possessing nuclear weapons. Neither country is a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

U.S. Said To Plan Air Base in Kashmir

BK1512142295 Madras DINAMALAR in Tamil 6 Dec 95 p 10

[FBIS Translated Text] Jammu, 6 Dec. A shocking report has emerged that the United States plans to set up an air base for military purposes in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir [POK].

There has been a long-standing dispute between India and Pakistan on Kashmir. The United States, time and again, pokes its nose into this dispute. It used to issue statements that the two countries should resolve this dispute through mutual negotiations. The United States has been extending all types of assistance, including supplying arms, to Pakistan. At this juncture, it plans to set up a military air base in POK.

For this purpose, senior U.S. military officials made an inspection visit to the POK a few weeks ago. They also held discussions with Pakistan's senior military officials on setting up the air base there.

Since the fragmentation of the erstwhile Soviet Union, China has been posing a big headache to the United States. It is reported that this air base is going to be set up to monitor the movements of China only.

It is understood that this air base may be set up at a locality called (Dusi) in POK. By setting up an air base at this locality, it is possible to monitor the movements of China, Afghanistan, and India.

Under these circumstances, several Pakistani leaders have condemned the United States for this step. Particularly former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who has strongly condemned this act by the United States. Saifur Rahman Khan, the Secretary General of the Pakistan Muslim League for Northern areas, has announced: We will not allow permission to be granted for the U.S. plan.

Pranab Mukherjee's Opinion

Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee has announced: We will never allow the mediation of a third country, including the United States, in the Kashmir dispute. Answering queries of the members in the Lok Sabha yesterday, Pranab Mukherjee said: Both India and Pakistan will solve their bilateral issues, including Kashmir, through negotiations. We will not permit any intervention from any country, including the United States. The United States has also been told that it should not supply arms to Pakistan. After acquiring sophisticated arms, Pakistan might use them against India. Pakistan has decided to acquire ultra modern weapons, which are not possessed by any country in the region. This will endanger the security of India. Russian authorities have also been told about their arms supply to Pakistan. It has been reported that following this, Russia will not supply arms to Pakistan.

'Dreaded Militant' Killed in Kashmir

BK1712162895 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Kashmir valley, a dreaded militant, Sartraj Ahmed Salroo, was killed in an encounter with the Jammu and Kashmir police at Mir Danter village in Khanabal in Anantnag District last night. Two other militants were also killed. The self-styled area commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Jamaitul Mujahideen, Sartraj Ahmed, was involved in about two dozen cases of murder and bomb blasts.

'Biased' OIC Resolution on Kashmir Rejected

BK1512145095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India today rejected as motivated and biased the latest resolution on Kashmir by the Organization of Islamic Conference, OIC. In a sharp reaction, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said that the resolution adopted at the OIC foreign ministers meeting in Guinea this week is the handiwork of Pakistan. He said the resolution is patently aimed at prolonging terrorism, militancy, and killing of innocent persons inspired from across the border.

PRC Minister Agrees on Cooperation in Coal Sector

BK1312163295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 13 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and China have agreed to strengthen cooperation in the coal sector. The decision was taken in New Delhi today when the Chinese coal minister, Mr. Wang Senhao, now on a visit to India, called on his Indian counterpart Mr. Jagdish Tytler. The high-level delegation comprising representatives of the Chinese coal companies is accompanying the minister.

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Iran

Khamene'i Says U.S. 'Doomed' to Destruction

LD1712170195 Tehran IRNA in English 1550 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 17, IRNA — The leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i on Sunday [17 December] said that the U.S. is doomed to destruction as the Western superpower, underlining that the opposition of the US and the Zionist regime to the Islamic system is a source of pride for the Muslim people of Iran.

The revered ayatollah called the U.S. and the Zionist regime the "ugliest and most notorious entities" in the world and noted that today the real face of those who talk idly about Iran and who attribute their wrong doings to Iran, have been made known to the peoples of the world.

The supreme leader of the Islamic revolution said the Islamic system is proud of neither compromising with the criminal bullies, nor recognizing the Zionist regime under any circumstances.

Ayatollah Khamene'i made the remarks in his address to the Air Force cadets during ceremony marking their graduation from the aviation college.

The commander-in-chief of the armed forces pointed out that when the region was under rule of corrupt systems, Iran was a safe haven for aliens and greedy foreign powers and an unsafe and disappointing place for the people of Iran.

However, the leader noted, thanks to the glorious Islamic Revolution today Iran is an independent country and the people of Iran will not bow to threats and bullyings of any power.

Ayatollah Khamene'i went on to say that the people of Iran in the past 17 years has demonstrated that they are strong, patient and aware and that they will continue treading their path. The leader of the Islamic Revolution hoped that the people and armed forces would continue to show growth in the spiritual, scientific, and industrial areas.

Ayatollah Khamene'i pointed out that today the armed forces, being proud of fulfilling the tough responsibilities, shoulder the sacred and honorable task of defending the nation and the country and the national sanctities.

On his visit to the Air Force faculty, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces reviewed the military forces stationed at the campus of the faculty.

The dean of the Air Force faculty briefed the leader on the faculty's academic progress and implementation of 225 research plan conducted at the college.

The leader then rewarded the graduates and praised the progress of the Air Force towards attaining self-sufficiency.

Ayatollah Khamene'i concluded by saying that the US and Israeli regimes constantly threaten Iran, but the Iranian people have stood firm in their principal positions by relying on faith, perseverance and overflowing talent, stressing that the Air Force should always be the symbol of this resistance and dynamism.

Further on Comments

LD1712141895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The fifth graduation ceremony at the Air Force Academy of the Islamic Republic of Iran took place this morning in the presence of His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the exalted leader of the Islamic revolution and the commander in chief. [passage omitted]

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the commander in chief, in a speech, referred to the important advances made by the forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran in various military, scientific, research, ideology, and ethical dimensions. He considered the achievements of the Air Force to result from the unceasing efforts of the martyred commanders Sattari, Baba'i, and Ardestani, as well as other commanders and officials of this force and, after praising the lofty position of martyr Sattari, agreed to a request by the head of the Air Force Academy to change its name to Martyr Sattari Academy.

The exalted leader, elaborating on the ominous consequences of the deep influence of foreigners in various dimensions in Iran at the time of the lackey Pahlavi regime, including the humiliating presence of foreign military advisors in the military forces, added: Contrary to those ignominious days, today the [Iranian] Armed Forces are totally aware of their grave duties and are proud to carry the holy duty of defending the nation, the country, and the national sanctities. They do not stint any effort in this regard since serving the Islamic system in any guise is tantamount to worship and a virtuous act and brings divine rewards. Praising the Iranian nation's steadfastness and perseverance in the face of foreign inducements, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i said: Those who used to praise Iran under the despotic Pahlavi rule today do not desist from anything in their animosity toward the Islamic system [

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Iran]. God has placed this nation in a position of pride by dint of its faith in Islam and self-reliance. Today the U.S. administration, which has helplessly failed to resolve its community's most basic problem — that is, the equality of the black and white races — attributes its own wicked vices to Iran. Racist, bullying terrorists must realize that the unholy alliance between the United States and the Zionist usurpers of Palestine will not get anywhere against the Muslim nation of Iran and they will not be able to inflict any harm against the powerful Iranian nation and the Islamic system [of Iran].

The commander in chief pointed out: We are proud that the most blackguardly and ugly political element in the world still continues its hostility toward us, as that demonstrates that the government and the nation of Islamic Iran, through their commitment to values, do not and will not come to terms with bullying and tyrannical acts and will continue their course powerfully, bravely, and patiently and with calmness, self-confidence, and with the hope of a bright future. Through reliance on Islam they will be more powerful every day. [passage omitted]

After visiting the exhibition, the commander in chief addressed a gathering of Air Force commanders and officials. He expressed his satisfaction over the advancing trend of military, scientific, and research issues and the attention paid in the Air Force to discipline. [passage omitted] He said: The Hezbollah forces will enable the Air Force to continue with [their] faith, sincerity, and bravery. [passage omitted]

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, referring to U.S. and the world's arrogant daily threats against the Muslim nation of Iran, said: Because of their inexperience, callowness, and ignorance of human realities, U.S. leaders have always been thwarted in the face of the Islamic system [of Iran] and their threats have not made the slightest impression in the determination and perseverance of Islamic Iran's officials. This is because the enemies of virtue, according to divine tradition, are incapable of penetrating an edifice that is founded on divine faith.

The commander in chief stressed: Just as the United States failed in its economic boycott plot and other conspiracies [against Iran], it will not be able to do a damn thing hence in the face of the Muslim Iranian nation's mountain of patience and faith and divine and everlasting potential.

Syrian Factor in Israeli, U.S. Elections Viewed

LD1512183195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 15 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher Thursday night, December 14th, began his 14th rotational tour of the Middle East. On the first leg of his tour Mr. Christopher will arrive in Syria to hold dialogues with top Syrian officials. He will later on visit Israeli officials in the occupied Palestine, the city of Eriha [Jericho], and, finally, Jordan and Egypt.

It is quite clear that the main objective behind Christopher's visit to the Middle East is revival of Tel Aviv-Damascus negotiations. In fact, with the approaching U.S. presidential elections and the referendum [as heard] in Israel, it seems that more efforts are being made to speed up Syria-Israeli talks which have reached a deadlock.

Syria is viewed by U.S. and Israeli officials as quite different from other sides of the compromise, since that country has, ever since Arab-Israeli dialogue in 1991, adopted an irrevocable policy. Tightening of sanctions on Syria could never force her to compromise in a manner desired by Israel.

According to the Damascus officials, the implementation of land for peace deal or, in other words, execution of Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 of the Security Council on the usurped territories of Arabs, especially the Golan Heights and South Lebanon, have always been the core of requests by Syria. The Israeli officials, however, always tried to move away from the initial principles of the Arab-Israeli talks, rejected just demands of Syria, and given the minimum concessions possible.

Analysts, however, believe that now Peres as the successor of Yitzhaq Rabin, the assassinated prime minister of Israel, is determined to force the Syrians to compromise and pave the grounds for the victory of the Labor Party in the upcoming elections. So the Israeli prime minister, presenting his plan to White House, though hastily, is desiring resumption of talks with Syria.

In the present circumstances, though Syrian side might seem willing to resume negotiations at the level of the two countries' ambassadors and within two sides' experts delegations, it will not accept any price for giving up its territorial integrity and sovereignty over Golan Heights, and will not become a winning card in the hands of the electoral candidates in the U.S. or Israel.

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Velayati Reacts to Possible Syria-Israel Accord

JN1712191095 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Report by Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni in Tehran]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati has said that his country's relations with Syria, as a sisterly country, will not be affected in essence if its signs an agreement with Israel. He said: However, we informed our Syrian friends many times that this will separate us from them in the lineup toward an illegal state, which we cannot recognize. In an exclusive statement to our radio, the Iranian foreign minister called on the Arab countries to conclude with Iran what he termed the agreement of the unity of common destiny in the face of the Israeli nuclear danger, and to abandon the idea of bringing in foreign forces to protect regional security.

Velayati said that the Arab countries are fully aware of their interests and priorities. Thus, he added, the Arab countries do not need instructions from Israeli leaders to define the kind of danger facing them. Velayati said: The Arab countries experienced four destructive wars with the Tel Aviv rulers, while Tehran has always been the sincere friend who defends the rights of the Arabs and Palestinians.

Velayati, who was speaking at a news conference on the sidelines of an international symposium on the Gulf in Tehran, praised Shaykh Zayid's recent statements on Iran. Velayati called for ending the Cold War atmosphere in the Gulf, which he says, Washington insists on maintaining.

It is noteworthy that this is the first time Tehran hosts an Iraq official in an international symposium on Gulf security. The Iraqi official is Salah al-Mukhtar, chief editor of the Baghdad-based AL- JUMHURIYAH, who, this evening, spoke about the eventual failure of the double-containment policy vis-a-vis Baghdad and Tehran.

Radio Discusses U.S. Aims in Haitian Election

LD1712162295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1100 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The people of Haiti are going to the polls to elect a president to succeed Jean-Bertrand Aristide 15 months after its military occupation by U.S. forces. Haiti's grave economic situation has not improved and the economic crisis has strongly undermined a U.S.-style democracy in that country.

Political experts assess two reasons for the grave economic situation in Haiti. First, U.S. pressure during the military rule in that country and, second, the failure of economic reforms by Aristide's government, which were accompanied by increased inflation, reduced purchasing power for essential commodities, reduction of foreign aid to zero, and 70 percent unemployment that has resulted in many people apprehensively seeking salvation through emigration.

On the other hand, the developments of the last month in Haiti speak to the approach of the United States toward that destitute country. A request by Aristide's supporters for his remaining president for a three more years in order to match the military rule of Raoul Cedras — a request that carried Aristide's tacit inclination — faced U.S. categorical opposition. That issue has strengthened speculation that the United States intends to place another pawn in power in Haiti who will be more dependent than Aristide.

Of course, it has been said that Raoul Cedras also has had close ties with the CIA and his coming to power was not without U.S. knowledge in order for him to pave the way for the military intervention. Despite U.S. promises of a return of the rule of law and improvement in the people's economic situation after the return of Aristide, not only did the country's economic status not improve, but the gravity of the situation deteriorated to the extent that the government resorted to pouring foreign currency into the market from currency reserves. The United States has placed the blame for the present critical situation at Aristide's door. That is why it has opposed his reelection to the presidency.

To sum up, it seems that the United States, by stressing an ostensible democracy in Haiti, including the return of Aristide and then his stepping aside, is pursuing several aims. First, to warn regional states that nothing should be done without U.S. knowledge and approval. Second, to warn the military in Latin America that the United States will not hesitate to support its dependent democracies.

But experts believe that although the United States was successful in reinstating Aristide and then opposing the renewal of his presidency, the main problem of the people lies elsewhere. To speak of democracy for a destitute people who are unable to secure their daily bread is preposterous. That is why the people of that country, in five elections in the past year, staged demonstrations, chanting: We want bread, not elections.

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Radio on Reaction to India's Possible Nuclear Test

LD1712115495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0440 GMT 17 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary; from "In the Periphery of News" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] There are rumors concerning India's intention to carry out a nuclear test. The test, India's first since 1974, has brought about a widespread propaganda clamor, especially by Americans. Washington's argument is that according to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] India is not considered a nuclear state and any test by India is considered as a blow against international nuclear disarmament efforts. Setting aside the issue of whether India will carry out such a test or not, a question raised at this point is that whether the nuclear club member states are themselves loyal to the NPT.

Evidence indicates that nuclear powers are not only disloyal to that treaty, but have also carried out nuclear tests openly or covertly and, while equipping their allies with nuclear arms, they are benefiting from their own nuclear power in line with their political and economic interests. Under such conditions, powerful states such as India also see nuclear tests as their right. New Delhi authorities, bearing in mind their 800-million-strong population and the country's sensitive and strategic position in the Indian Ocean, see themselves in a position that obliges them to carry out nuclear tests in order to assume an important role in the international order.

In recent years India has been described as a medium power or an emerging power. Such a description of India as a regional power stems mainly from one factor — India's emerging potential to expand its power beyond its borders and in southern Asia, as well as its capability to produce nuclear arms. Besides its existing conventional forces, India's medium-range ballistic missiles and expertise in an extensive sector of nuclear technology, as well as a powerful and growing Navy, contribute to that potential power. An increase in India's nuclear capability is only part of its efforts to show power on the international scene. New Delhi is one of the claimants of permanent membership of the UN Security Council. This country has also endeavored, through intensive investment in the economic sector, to accelerate its development.

In the final analysis it must be said that although nuclear tests, in themselves, are considered undesirable and can be thought of as a serious threat against international peace and security, that import becomes meaningful only when all those states that have the capability to carry out nuclear tests desist from any such tests and avoid any transfer of nuclear arms and technology to their allies.

Velayati Calls Recent Talks With UAE 'Positive'

LD1712163895 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Our country's foreign minister spoke to the Central News Unit today and described as positive the trend of talks between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates [UAE] at the recent meeting in Doha, Qatar.

'Ali Akbar Velayati pointed to the long-standing friendly relations between Iran and the UAE, adding: The two countries have up to now tried not to let misunderstandings affect the good neighborly relations between them.

Velayati emphasized that the Iranian delegation is ready to participate in the next session of talks. He said: We hope to overcome these difficulties in the not too distant future.

Velayati referred to America's adverse propaganda against Iran, saying: We call for tranquility in the region while the Americans, because they want to justify their presence there, seek to create tension and artificial crisis in the region.

Persian Gulf International Seminar Held in Tehran

Velayati on U.S. 'Conspiracies'

LD1712122695 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Addressing the opening session of the sixth international seminar on the Persian Gulf, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati described the conspiracies of the United States in the region, including the policy of creating artificial crises in the Persian Gulf, the policy of dual containment, and the imposition of economic pressure and sanctions on Iran. He stated that the continuing transfer of weapons and forces by foreign powers to some of the countries in the region was a product of their aim to impose their own particular policies in the Persian Gulf.

He noted: Even though the main reason for the presence of foreign forces in the region, that is, the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, has been removed, nevertheless, foreign fleets embark on provocative military maneuvers in the region on flimsy pretexts and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf spend huge sums on each of these occasions to pay for the costs of the dispatch of U.S.

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forces to the region; something which is not to the advantage of either Iran, the Arabs, or Muslims.

The foreign minister referred to the willingness and good will of the Islamic Republic of Iran to resolve problems and misunderstandings with neighboring countries and expressed the hope that Iran's neighbors would, by relying on this method, put aside old enmities and false and chronic disputes and bring about the conditions for friendship and cooperation.

He said: The application of the new world order in the Persian Gulf region must coincide with the exit of foreign forces and the removal of their colonialist bases in the region and with the possibility of the countries of the area to benefit from their own natural and God-given resources and a restoration of their legal and legitimate rights to choose their own destiny and their own kind of government.

In addition to a large number of domestic lecturers and experts, 40 researchers from European, Asian, and American countries are taking part in the two-day sixth international seminar on the Persian Gulf at which they will be discussing different issues relating to the Persian Gulf.

Further on Velayati Speech

LD1712160995 Tehran IRNA in English 1509 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 17, IRNA — The sixth international seminar on the Persian Gulf entitled "Persian Gulf and Changing Structure of International Order" began work with an inaugural speech by Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati here Sunday [17 December] morning.

Velayati in his speech elaborated on Europe's efforts to put an end to the monopolized domination over international order and division of the world into two blocs by the U.S. and the former Soviet Union during half a century span.

The foreign minister said the disintegration of the former Soviet Union brought about new calculations and economic and financial blocs in different parts of the world.

Iran's foreign minister went on to say that in the past few years powerful Asian countries have risen against the U.S. which claims to be the dominant power in the world after the fall of the former Soviet Union.

Velayati referred to China and Japan which have, as he said, obtained their special standing in the future international order.

He also pointed to the growing Islamic awareness and assumption of a new dynamic concept of transnationalism referred to as "single Islamic community".

The foreign minister also highlighted the role of Muslim people and cooperation between Islamic countries and the organization of the Islamic conference in restoring parts of the rights of the oppressed people of Bosnia.

Referring to the unprecedented rush of alien forces to the Persian Gulf, the foreign minister said the not only have the foreign powers being present in the region been unable to establish peace and stability in the Persian Gulf, but also the Persian Gulf has been a witness to new crises emerging in the region.

He accused the U.S. of pursuing a policy of creating crises in the Persian Gulf and said the U.S. attribute any crisis, rioting or bomb explosions in the Persian Gulf littoral states to Iran.

The foreign minister termed invitation of foreign powers to bring security to the Persian Gulf a "big blunder" and said in an atmosphere of suspicion and concern, triggered by military presence of aliens and their intimidating and divisive policy, the regional countries have no option but to get closer to one another and build confidence among them.

Stressing the necessity of withdrawal of alien forces from the Persian Gulf, Iran's foreign minister said regional problems will not be resolved merely by inviting foreign powers and seeking their help.

He also said the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that these problems will be settled through prudence, understanding and peaceful means.

Political experts from Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Britain, Germany, the US, France, China, Russia and Japan are to present papers on the issues to be discussed at the seminar.

Iraqi Editor Urges Improved Ties

LD1812122095 Tehran IRNA in English 1157 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 18, IRNA — Editor in chief of Iraqi daily AL-JUMHURIYAH, Salah al-Mukhtar has stressed the necessity for immediate improvement of Iran-Iraq relations and said close ties between the two countries will be to the benefit of the two nations and thwart colonialist plans of the U.S. and Israel in the region.

Talking to IRNA here on Monday [18 December], Salah al-Mukhtar added that Iraq and Iran share many

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commonalities in their foreign policy and that the two countries should get united to counter the plots stemming from Washington's dual containment policy. Salah al-Mukhtar is here to attend the sixth international seminar on the Persian Gulf and the changing structure of the international system.

He said, "As I have written in my daily, Tehran and Baghdad should develop a kind of strategic alliance or at least tactical cooperation to foil the conspiracies of the US and Israel in the region."

Al-Mukhtar stressed that the government and people of Iran want expanded cooperation between the two countries, noting that there are two barriers impeding rapprochement between Iran and Iraq: The issues of prisoners of war and Iraqi aircrafts in Iran.

The editor in chief of AL-JUMHURIYAH said the lack of mutual confidence is natural after an eight year long war but the governments of two countries' governments should not allow bitter memories of the past to prevent them from countering the challenges of their common enemies.

He added that one of the policies of the US and Israel is to aggravate the atmosphere of distrust exisiting between the two countires and give the impression that any joint cooperation between Iraq and Iran is doomed to failure.

Al-Mukhtar said that "in Iraq we are awaiting the arrival of Iran's foreign minister. Iraq hopes to welcome Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati as soon as possible because we believe this visit will remove obstacles hindering the improvement of relations between the two countries."

Deputy Minister: Afghan Leaders Opted for War

LD1712215995 Tehran IRNA in English
2147 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mazar-e Sharif, Dec. 17, IRNA — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Oceanic Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi Saturday [16 December] told leader of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan General Dostam that Iran was deeply concerned about the present situation in Afghanistan, and that it would continue her efforts to end confrontation in that country.

The Iranian official said that the internal war in Afghanistan had done irreparable damage to the people and government in Afghanistan the responsibility for which, he said, is that of the leaders who had opted for war in preference to talks.

General Dostam appreciated the help having been offered by Iran for bringing peace to Afghanistan, and said the movement was perfectly ready to help materialize that goal.

General Dostam said all rival parties in Afghanistan now carrying arms against each other would eventually correct themselves and opt for talks in preference to fighting.

He said his country needed a government of all jihadi groups with a cross-section of all people in Afghanistan.

Tehran Prepared To Help With Kashmir 'Problem'

LD1712095295 Tehran IRNA in English
0617 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 17, IRNA — Iran respects the will of the Kashmiri people and is ready to help iron out the Kashmir problem, said a senior Foreign Ministry official.

Speaking to the English-language daily TEHRAN TIMES published Sunday [17 December], Deputy Foreign Minister for Pacific-Asian Affairs, 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi called on the involved parties in Kashmir to patch up their differences through peaceful channels and refrain from violence.

Tehran has repeatedly announced its stance on Kashmir, said Borujerdi, stating that Iran respects the will and any decision taken by the Kashmiri people.

While expressing Tehran's deep concern over the continued hardships of the Kashmiri people, he voiced Iran's readiness to mediate between Pakistan and India in a bid to solve the prevailing crisis.

He felt confident that the Kashmiri crisis could be solved with India and Pakistan both respecting the will and desire of the Kashmiri people.

India considers Kashmir as part of its territory and Pakistan calls for implementation of the United Nations' resolutions demanding for a fair referendum on the right to self-determination for the Kashmiris, the paper wrote.

It added that President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rasfsanjani in a meeting with Pakistan's deputy foreign minister, Najmuddin Sheikh, last June described the kashmir crisis as a serious hindrance on the way of regional cooperation among Tehran, Islamabad and New Delhi.

Pakistani Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, during her visit to Tehran on November 6th, said that given Islamic Republic's good relations both with Pakistan and India, Islamabad seeks Tehran's mediation in this regard, TEHRAN TIMES concluded.

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Militant Clerics Not To Nominate Majles Candidate

NC1512130395

[FBIS Editorial Report] Tehran dailies SALAM, HAMSHAHRI, ABRAR, and JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian all carry identical reports on 12 December on remarks by Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mehdi Karrubi that the Tehran Militant Clerics Society will not nominate any candidates for the upcoming Majles elections.

Tehran SALAM in Persian carries a report on pages one and two of its 12 December issue entitled: "Tehran Militant Clerics Society Will Not Nominate Any Candidate for the Fifth Majles Elections." The text of the report states:

"Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mehdi Karrubi deemed the emergence of political factions in the country a source of greater strength for the Majles, more seriousness in the elections, and insurance for the system, which would inspire joy among the people.

"Speaking to the special IRNA correspondent for the fifth round of the Islamic Majles elections, he said: Strong parties serve as an important supervisory system that prevent violations and generate healthy rivalry.

"Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mehdi Karrubi stressed: With the emergence of a new set of circumstances in the country, the need for explaining the establishment of political parties is being felt even more.

"In response to a question regarding the participation of the Tehran Militant Clerics Society [TMCS] in the fifth round of the Islamic Majles elections, he said: No candidate will be nominated on behalf of the TMCS but the society and likeminded [hamfekran] people have constantly stressed participation in the elections and have motivated people to take an active role.

"Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Karrubi referred to the opinion of his eminence the imam (may God be pleased with him) especially with regard to the importance of the position of the Islamic Majles elections and the momentous role of the people. He said: In our speeches in various gatherings, we intend to encourage the people to participate actively in the elections.

"He said: The holding of elections in a appropriate manner on the one hand and the active participation of the people on the other will depend on relevant officials creating suitable conditions.

"Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin added: The overall longterm benefits and interests of the hallowed system of the Islamic Republic of Iran should be borne in mind. Refraining from distinctive leanings will pave the way for the active participation of all the forces loyal to the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran who abide by the Constitution.

"He added: The issue of the elections should be treated more seriously so that it facilitates the entry of competent, qualified, and specialized personnel into the Majles.

"Regarding the likely composition of the deputies of the fifth Majles term, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Karrubi said: In my opinion, the fifth Majles has experienced some adjustments compared to earlier terms. It is possible that it will change from its present homogeneous character and individuals may enter the Majles who may not be affiliated with any of the current factions."

Tehran HAMSHAHRI in Persian on 12 December carries an identical report on Karrubi's remarks on page two. The report is entitled: "Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Karrubi: The Way Will Be Paved for the Active Participation of all Forces Loyal to the Constitution and the System of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Tehran ABRAR in Persian on 12 December carries an identical report on Karrubi's remarks on pages one and two under the headline: "The Militant Clerics Society and the Next Majles Elections Will Not Be of One Single Faction—Karrubi."

Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian on 12 December carries a report on page three entitled: "Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Karrubi: The Way Should Be Paved for the Entry of Competent, Qualified, and Specialized Personnel in the Majles." It is also identical to the SALAM, ABRAR, and HAMSHAHRI reports.

Rowhani: Everyone Must Take Part in Elections

LD1812143695

[FBIS Editorial Report] Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian at 0933 GMT on 18 December broadcasts a 55-minute recording of a speech by Deputy Majles Speaker Hasan Rowhani at a ceremony marking the death anniversary of Martyr Mohammad Mofatteh. The date and place of the ceremony is not given. Reception is poor, partly due to noise from the audience.

After speaking about past attempts by colonialist powers and the former regime to separate universities from seminaries and their failure to do so, Rowhani says:

"We will soon have elections for the Majles. The elections are approaching. So much noise, so much hue and cry!

"Gentlemen, the road is open to everyone. Everyone must come forward to be elected, to vote, to participate.

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(?It is not something for just a few.) It is our religious duty. It is our national duty. It is our revolutionary duty. The imam [Khomeyni] told us we should participate. The imam told us we should take part. The imam told us to have long lines leading to the ballot boxes. The eminent leader [Khamene'i] has told us to play an active part in all elections. It is our religious duty. It is our duty according to the Shari'ah.

"(?Some individuals are saying in the background): Gentlemen, these elections are not real elections because the Guardian Council has a supervisory role which allows it to approve candidates. What kind of thing is this to say? Do we not obey the law here? Do we not adhere to the Constitution? We call on all dear people, all brothers, all thinkers, people who oppose, people who agree, this faction, that faction, moderates, nonmoderates, any faction — it is not important, it does not matter under what name. [sentence as received]

"In an Islamic system, anyone who accepts the velayat [guardianship of a religious leader], accepts the Constitution, is dear, is respected, regardless of his ideas and views, regardless of who he wants to elect. He can vote for anyone he likes. He is free. But he should know that, in any case, this country has laws. We must all bow before the law. Keeping in mind that we have a Constitution, it is clear who is responsible for interpreting this Constitution. The Constitution itself makes it clear who is responsible for its interpretation: the Guardian Council. We must respect the Constitution. If we do not obey the Constitution, everything will fall apart. Not to obey the Constitution would lead to chaos, to mayhem. The law is the basis for everything. We must obey the law, the law made by the Majles, the Constitution. We must all respect them and we must all come onto the stage.

"If I do not come on the stage, well, that is my problem. I have acted contrary to my duty. If I am competent to become a candidate but do not do so, then I have acted contrary to my duty — if I am competent. (?If I am not competent myself, but know someone who is, I should vote for him.) Is any other way possible? Everyone must come on the stage. Do not be afraid that you may not get any votes. What does it matter? Come onto the stage, all of you. Stand as candidates, if you consider yourself to be suitable. Do not be afraid of standing because you fear you will not get any votes. What does it matter? Nothing will happen to you. That is how it is in the world of politics. One person wins today and another wins tomorrow. You must all come on the stage."

After repeating this theme, Rowhani says: "The people understand why foreign radios have already begun commenting on the upcoming Majles elections. The Voice of America has begun; Radio Israel and the BBC have begun. And how good it is that they have begun, because our people are intelligent. When they see that the Voice of America, Radio Israel, and the BBC are saying that the upcoming elections will not be well received or interesting or that there will be no enthusiasm, our people understand what is worrying them. They are worried that the lines at the polling stations will be long and that the people will participate in large numbers.

"Our people will go to the polling stations despite the wishes of the colonialist powers. Of course, they will do this in anyway they like, voting for whomever they choose, whomever they think is suitable. They will vote for the candidate of any group or association. Naturally, this or that group or association may inspire greater confidence. If the people trust a group more, they will vote for its candidates. If people actually know a candidate, they will tend to vote for the candidate they know.

"We must enthusiastically hold elections in March, with a good turnout and, God willing, we will thereby deliver a slap in the face of the United States, and Israel, and the enemies of Islam — God willing."

Rowhani concludes his speech by speaking in praise of the Islamic system.

Discussion on Upcoming Majles Elections Reported

NC1412143795 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 28 Nov 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A roundtable discussion of the performance of the fourth Majles and the elections for the fifth term was held yesterday in the presence of Engineer Mohammad Reza Bahonar, a member of the Majles executive board, and Deputy Majles Speaker 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani under the auspices of the Islamic Society of Students of Tehran University's School of Medicine at the Sina Auditorium. [passage omitted]

Referring to the change in the way people vote for Majles deputies, Eng. Bahonar said: If, in the past, people—especially in the towns—voted for "individuals," today they vote for "platforms."

In this roundtable discussion, Eng. Bahonar was asked: His Excellency Hashemi-Rafsanjani is trying to strengthen the technocrat faction to retain his power. Does this not mean the Tehran Militant Clergy is branching out?

He answered: His Excellency Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Hashemi-Rafsanjani is considered to be among the founders of the Islamic Revolution and his effective presence in the late imam's movement, in

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the Revolution Council, and in the Islamic Republic Party, as well as his executive duties have made him an exceptional figure.

He said: His Excellency Hashemi-Rafsanjani's spirit is such that he wants to use all the system's potential to promote the objectives of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Republic. This was seen in his retaining the forces that existed in Eng. Musavi's cabinet.

Eng. Bahonar recalled: Being a technocrat does not automatically mean opposing values. Many of our experts consider themselves to be Muslims first and Iranian, then technocrats. A specific group of these people prefers science to religion. But these people's account is separate from that of the others.

He added: Hashemi-Rafsanjani is a member of the Central Committee of the Tehran Militant Clergy Association. But his cabinet does not only include members of this association. As for the elections, the list put forward by the association is also endorsed by Hashemi-Rafsanjani. Branching off means a separate list of candidates is proposed. I think this will not happen.

He said: Those who understand things know the list of candidates proposed by the Tehran Militant Clergy is approved at a meeting attended by Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani, and Nateq- Nuri. [passage omitted]

At this roundtable discussion, Mohajerani was asked: Will you form an alliance with Karbaschi and Mar'ashi and will you participate in the Majles and presidential elections together with some members of the Freedom Movement? Will you propose Habibi as a presidential candidate?

Mohajerani answered: We have not formed any group for us to form an alliance with the Freedom Movement. I personally have nothing to do with this. As for the presidential elections, some people have expressed their readiness to stand as candidates, while others have remained silent. Some have given no clear answer.

He added: Habibi has said nothing. But there is no doubt he will be a candidate in the presidential elections, since he is one of the most sound political and executive figures in the country.

Mohajerani recalled: I consider Nateq-Nuri and Habibi to be among the most outstanding candidates in the presidential elections.

Asked about a proposal to alter the Constitution to let Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani keep his presidential post, he said: Since I am the vice president for parliamentary affairs, my comments may be interpreted in various ways. But I believe His Excellency Hashemi-Rafsanjani is one of Iran's sources of pride and a personality who sums up the personalities of Amir Kabir and the martyr Modarres. The situation in the country is exceptional and each year that passes makes its management more difficult.

He said: I have stated my personal views. Those who protested were not people of unsound judgment, but people who were stating their personal views. They said the Constitution should not be changed. Hashemi-Rafsanjani himself did not consider it expedient to change it.

Mohajerani added: Of course we must not think that if Hashemi- Rafsanjani is not elected president, there will be no one else to take the helm of the country and the revolution.

He added: To consolidate the basis of the revolution, its founding fathers should run the revolution for decades to come.

'Free Elections' Urged Over 'Factional Victories'

LD1412214095 Tehran IRNA in English 2126 GMT 14 December 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 14, IRNA — A morning daily commenting on elections in Iran, explained that credit will be obtained by free elections, not factional victories. The English-language daily "IRAN NEWS", in its editorial wrote that Iranian elections, particularly parliamentary elections, are assessed and analyzed by international political pundits with great sensitivity and acuteness.

"We have noticed that government officials in our country seem to be anxious for holding free and fair parliamentary elections in a strictly democratic atomosphere. This is a sign of healthy society", the article said. During the last three months, it was alleged that the Interior Ministry had made major changes in its administration. The ministry is directly reponsible for holding all elections in the country, the editorial added.

The Interior Ministry has issued transfer orders for provincial governors-general, governors, district officials and others, it was alleged. It is to be noted that the present provincial officials mostly belong to the 'left wing'. The predecessors of Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati used to be considered members of the left wing.

It said that the transfer orders were mostly made for administrative purposes. However, certain political circles have shown sensitivity to these changes in the Interior Ministry.

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In light of these facts, election officials shoulder the great responsibility of making sure that the election process is conducted under free and fair conditions without any regard to the influence of individuals, factions and groups, the editorial said. The elections for the legislative body in any country are considered crucial for laying the foundation of a genuine democracy which is the order of the day. In any country, if the credibility of elections beomes suspect, the entire political fabric of that country will break down.

These officials, the article concluded, should note that free and fair elections are the only means to maintain and enhance the credit and prestige of the country's prevailing system — not the victory of this or that faction or group.

Radio on Arrest of Foreign Exchange Dealers

LD1612131295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On 14 December, the Information Ministry general office for Tehran Province, in cooperation with the Law Enforcement Force, began an operation against foreign currency smuggling and the illegal export of foreign currency bank drafts on 14 December. These operations have so far led to the arrest of 40 people involved in selling, buying and smuggling foreign currency bank drafts.

These individuals, recently found loitering in front of the Central Bank building, have been involved in hoarding as well as illegal selling and buying of foreign currency. This activity has caused fluctuations, and therefore insecurity, in the foreign currency market. A substantial amount of foreign currency and also some forged foreign notes were confiscated from these individuals.

The ministry's report adds that most of these offenders have confessed to selling forged foreign currency notes to customers in order to increase their profit margins. They have also confessed that they have been in contact with a number of foreign financial institutions.

Moreover, they have admitted that under various covers, such as dealing in audio-visual equipment, gold, money exchange and commercial companies, they have been engaging in the smuggling of foreign currency bank drafts.

At the same time, another group of foreign currency smugglers have been arrested by the unknown soldiers of the Lord of the Age [Shi'i 12th Imam. The unknown soldiers mean the Information Ministry's undercover agents].

These individuals were involved in smuggling foreign currency to the Persian Gulf littoral states. They carried out their activities in the country's southern provinces and worked under instructions from their bosses in Tehran.

Bonyad-e Mosta'zafan's Activities Detailed

96LA0053A Tehran RESALAT in Persian 30 Aug 95 pp 1, 15

[FBIS Translated Text] **Economics Division—By the end of 1374 [20 March 1996], the program to transfer the factories of the Foundation for the Oppressed and Self-Sacrificers of the Islamic Revolution [Bonyad-e Mosta'zafan] will be announced to the public.**

According to a report by the economic correspondent of RESALAT, Mohsen Rafiqdust, the director of the Foundation for the Oppressed and Self-Sacrificers, at the inauguration of Phase I of the Polymer Production Line of the Alyaf Company made this statement yesterday (Tuesday [29 August]) in a gathering of reporters and added: Most of the small factories of the Foundation for the Oppressed will be transferred to the people after reforming the financial structure, through stock market bidding and negotiations, and from the sale of these factories, other new large production and industrial units will be built.

He said: Last year, too, the Foundation for the Oppressed transferred 11 factories to applicants.

The director of the Foundation for the Oppressed and Self-Sacrificers referred to the policy of developing exports as a principle in this foundation and said: Last year, the level of exports of the Foundation for the Oppressed reached $100 million, and by the end of this year, it will reach $140 million.

He mentioned the amount of expenditures made in the Foundation for the Oppressed in the division of the self-sacrificers and deprived to be 175 billion rials [R] and R100 billion, respectively, last year and added: By the end of this year, R215 billion will be spent by this foundation in the self-sacrificers division and R120 billion in the deprived division.

Rafiqdust pointed out that the level of investments of the Foundation for the Oppressed in various economic sectors is about R310 billion and said: With the operation of six factories that are under construction for the production of dairy products by the Foundation for the Oppressed, the capacity of the dairy industry products of the country will increase from 500,000 tons at the present to 900,000 tons annually.

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Stating that "stating tomorrow (Wednesday) the new Iranit Production Line will begin operations in one of the units of the Foundation for the Oppressed in Esfahan," he said: Within the next month, the Saveh Tile Factory, within the next few months the large tar refinery, and by the end of this year the industrial fibers factory that produces raw materials for tires will go into operation.

Rafiqdust stated: Next week, the Abadan Hotel, which had been totally destroyed during the war years, will be put into operation. Also, within the next two months, the Shahr-e Kord Hotel and in the future months the Yasuj Hotel will be opened.

Rafiqdust mentioned the reason for the delay in the operation of the passenger train line of the Foundation for the Oppressed to be problems created in Customs matters and said: In the future days, with the resolving of those problems, in the first phase, two trains will start their activities on the Tehran-Mashhad route. These trains will be able to travel this distance in 10.5 hours.

Regarding the operation of the airlines of this foundation, the director of the Foundation for the Oppressed and Self-Sacrificers said: So far, we have not succeeded in purchasing airplanes, but at the present, studies of the matter have started on a large scale.

He mentioned attention to the growth of production and quality as two essential goals in the economic activities of the Foundation for the Oppressed and said: Comparative statistics of the production of the units of this foundation in 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995] compared to 1368 [21 March 1989-20 March 1990], in addition to increasing the level of production, also indicate the creation of variety and superiority of quality.

Rafiqdust stated: For example, the level of sugar production during these years has had a growth of 110 percent and beverages more than 150 percent.

He pointed out that the level of production of beverages by the end of this year in the companies under the control of the Foundation for the Oppressed will be 1.3 billion bottles.

It should be pointed out that yesterday four projects in the textile division of the Foundation for the Oppressed at a cost of $23 million and R33 billion were put into operation. With the operation of Phase 1 of the Polymer Production Line in the Alyaf Company, in addition to the increase in the capacity of daily production of six tons of nylon thread, for the first time, four tons of nylon chips will be produced in this company daily.

Financial Establishments

96LA0053B Tehran RESALAT in Persian 2 Sep 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] **Neka', RESALAT correspondent—By the end of this year, 100 branches of the financial and credit establishment of the Foundation for the Oppressed and Self-Sacrificers [Bonyad-e Mosta'zafan] will be opened throughout the country.**

This statement was made by Zaman Kiamehr, the head of this establishment, in Neka', and he added: At the present, 50 branches of this establishment are offering banking services to the people in Tehran and other areas of the country.

He mentioned the goal of creating this establishment as helping the banks, collecting revolving cash flow from the people, and spending it in the areas of agriculture, industries, services, roads, construction, etc. He said: This action is done in accordance with the interest-free banking law and in accordance with the instructions and dissertation of the Imam and religious jurists. The profits resulting from such partnerships will be divided proportionately among the investors.

It is noteworthy that the financial and credit establishment of the foundation at the Neka' branch was put into operation simultaneous with Government Week in the presence of two members of the board of directors of this establishment.

MJF Earns $12 Million Through Tourism

96LA0069A Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 4 Nov 95 p 4

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mashhad, Khorasan Province, 3 November (IRNA)—Iran's Mosta'zafan and Janbazan Foundation (MJF) has earned $12 million from tourism this calendar year (started 21 March 1995), announced a senior official of the foundation.

Head of MJF tourism organization and recreation centers, Akbar Ghamkhar said Thursday [2 November] in Mashhad, Khorasan Province, northeastern Iran that it is expected that the foundation's income from tourism would hit $20 million next year.

Ghamkhar added that the foundation is currently working on 6 projects concerning the construction of six 3- to 5-star hotels in Yasuj (Kohkiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad Province), Shahr-e Kord, Bam (Kerman Province), Darband (Tehran), Mashhad (Khorasan Province) and Tabriz (West Azarbaijan).

He concluded by saying that the 4-star hotel of Shahr-e Kord will be operational during this Iranian month

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(ending 21 November) and the 4-star hotel of Yasuj will be inaugurated by the end of this year (ending 21 March 1996).

Transportation Advertisements

96LA0060A Tehran IRAN NEWS (ECONOMIC REVIEW SUPPLEMENT) in English 1 Nov 95 p 5-7

[p 5] txt)[FBIS Transcribed Text]

BOTO

In an effort to expedite the achievement of economic goals set forth by the Islamic Government of Iran, Bonyad-e Mosta'zafan and Janbazan of I.R. Iran decided to concentrate and at the same time expand its transportation activities in one group and thus the Bonyad Transport Organization (BOTO) was born. Currently the B.T.O. [as published] consists of air, rail, sea and road transportation branches incorporating 10 companies involved in shipping, ship agency, stevedoreing, customs clearance services, domestic and international road and rail transportation. In addition, BOTO intends to set up new companies in heavy transportation, container handling services and passenger movement by air and sea, thus providing the business sector with an all encompassing organization offering more efficient transportation management at a lower cost.

No. 20, Gandhi Ave., Tehran 15179, Iran
Tel: 226 7920-21
Fax: 226 5507
Tlx: 226 215-16 BOTO IR

[p 5]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Bon Tour

As early as 1992, when Bonyad Transport Organization resolved to broaden its production base to include air passenger transport, the prospect of a captive travel agency had also been viewed with enthusiasm.

By late 1993, when the railroad project was on the drawing board, the idea was further enhanced and, before long, Bonyad Travel Agency (Bon Tour) filed for registration.

The rationale behind the move is not only the positive, long-term contribution of the agency operation to the consolidated concerning of the organization but, above all, the feed-back from direct customer contact. The information and market intelligence originating from the agency operation will substantially help the carriers to improve their marketing effort, besides serving as reliable input in the organization's expansion plans.

Bon Tour opened for business a week before the inauguration journey of Bon Rail's trains on September 15, 1995. Tel: 888 0601-2; Fax:225 9479

[p 5]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Bon Rail

By virtue of the directives set forth in Decree No. 27638 dated 1992/11/28 of the Council of Ministers, and within the context of an agreement reached with the Islamic Government of Iran State Railway, Bonyad Railways Company has been corporated as the country's first non-government business enterprise, catering rail-transport services.

The company which is expected to shortly commence operations, shall undertake freight and passenger services, with superior quality standards, as its foremost objective.

The commissioning of Tehran-Mashhad express service will mark the Company's first phase of activities.

No. 26, 7th St., Khaled Islamboli Ave., Tehran, Iran.
Tel: 8724012 - 8724014; Fax: 8724011

[p 6]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Bon Air

The establishment of Bon Air is the first pace of Bonyad into the field of aviation industry.

In April 1994, after feasibility studies, Bon Air started the preparation for operation.

Bon Air activities will be concentrated in passenger and cargo transportation in both domestic and international routes. Investment in the fields of air transportation and airport industry in the country, is another goal of Bon Air.

No. 1, Kamran St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran, Iran.
Tel:0098 21 889 7771, 72
Fax: 0098 21 894 993
Tlx: 216982 BONA IR

[p 6]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Bonyad Barandaz Co

Stevedoring company offering a full range of services and supervising tallygating, lighering and warehousing.

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No. 20, Gandhi Ave., Tehran, Iran.
Tel: 888 0601-2, 226 7923
Fax: 226 7923
Tlx: 22614 BOBA AR

[p 6]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Jaddehranan International Transport Co

Jaddehranan was established in 1983 as an international transport forwarding co., with its main office in Tehran and its terminal in Tehran Karaj Road.

A) IMPORTS

1-Via the Commonwealth of Independents States (CIS)
2-Via Turkey
3-Via country southern ports by direct vessel
4-Groupage service

B) EXPORTS

1-From all over the country to Europe by Iranian, Russian and Bulgarian trucks.
2-From ports of Anzali and Nowshahr to Krasnovodsk by vessel. Then to European countries and ex-Soviet republics by rail (containerized and conventional).
3-From all Iranian origins to Armenia by Iranian trucks via Meghri border.
4-Via Lotfabad border to Ashkhabad and other Central Asian Countries.

C) CARRIER

Shipment of exporting and importing cargoes via Astara and Bazargan border.

D) Local transportation

No. 36, Khosro Khavar St., Vali-e Asr Ave., (P.C. 15946), Tehran, Iran
Tel: 891 222, 891 355
Fax: 891221
Tlx: 222 523 SKVN IR, 214 415 JRIT IR

[p 7]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

BOSACO

[Word indistinct] staffed by a dedicated team of qualified mariners and backed up by an efficient network of on-site offices. The company provided independent, professional ship agency services to a wide clientele around the clock, throughout the year.

Call us when only the best is good enough for you, and let our experience work for you.

No. 20, Gandhi Ave., Tehran, Iran (15177)
Tel: 226 5501/888 0601-2
Fax: 226 5601
Tlx: 226 212 BOSC IR

[p 7]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Bosco

Bonyad shipping co. (Bosco), as one of the Iranian national lines, has been established in 1990. Using modern vessels either owned or chartered, Bosco maintains tramp services for cargo over 10,000 tons from all ports of the world and also liner services for general, project and containerized cargoes from Far East, North & South Europe, Canada and U.S.A. ports. Bosco is one of the subsidiaries of "Bonyad Transportation Organization." This organization enjoys broad "facilities" in the field of air and land transportation as well as ship's agency, stevedoring and customs clearance in all the Iranian ports and customs.

No. 20, Gandhi Ave., Tehran, Iran. Tel: 226 5501, 226 9516, 649 9211; Fax: 226 5601, 226 6951; Tlx: 226 213 BOSA IR

[p 7]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

T.B.T.

By employing the latest equipment and facilities in the field of international transport and experienced and devoted workforce as well as its contractual links with several internationally known European companies T.B.T. is ideally positioned to render transportation services to its clients.

T.B.T. Co owns a fleet of 150 reefer trailers and also another 100 trailers under its management entering into contracts with well experienced owner operators. These fleets are actively engaged in the transportation of foodstuff and other goods transported through the country and CIS countries and also transportation of exporting goods in international routes. Meanwhile, we are prepared to import goods from Austria, Germany, Italy, England, Belgium and France.

ADD: Ave sapahbod Qarani No. 118 Tehran - Iran
Tel: 891061-5, 889 1632
Tlx: 212158 T.B.T IR, 212637 T.B.T IR

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[p 7]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Bonyad Customs Service Co

As an integral element of the door-to-door service philosophy of Bonyad Transport Organization, the Customs Services Co. is an indispensable link in a chain of operations designed to lend the organization competitive advantage in her efforts to ensure customer satisfaction.

In an industry such as customs services which knows few barriers to entry, it is professional expertise, or the lack of it, which can spell the difference between success and failure. It is precisely in this area where Bonyad Customs Services Co. enjoys its major strength. Years of practical experience, a thorough mastery of export-import experience, a thorough mastery of export-import regulations and their sometimes conflicting implications, and well-placed connections have earned the company a degree of technical know-how and professional skill which enable them to deal expertly with the most complicated cases. Bonyad Customs Clearance Services Co. offers a wide range of professional and consultative services to her sister companies as well as to other clients affiliated with Mostazafan and Janbazan Foundation.

Tel: 671196
Fax: 675881

Pakistan

Official Views U.S. Statement on Karachi

BK1612114695 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 16 Dec 95 p 12

[Report by Mohammad Yasin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 14 — Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs George Clements, Thursday [14 December] strongly dispelled the impression in the National Assembly that the United States has threatened the Government of Pakistan on the prevailing situation in Karachi.

He was responding to the call attention notice by Jamaat-e-Islami MNA [member of National Assembly] Muzaffar Hashmi and some PML (N) [Pakistan Muslim League — Nawaz] MNAs on the US State Department's statement had issued a statement expressing its concern over the custodial deaths and targeting family members of the officials of the government and the political leaders. The MNAs had contended that it was an interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan.

George Clements said emphatically that the US statement could not be termed as interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan. He said Pakistan is not at all under pressure of the United States. He said the US had not threatened Pakistan on the Karachi situation. By no means, he said, the views expressed by the US State Department could be described as American interference in the internal affairs of the country.

The Parliamentary Secretary held that the views expressed by the US State Department were based on propaganda material. He said Pakistan will apprise the Americans on the state of affairs in order to counter the negative propaganda.

Replying to the accusation levelled by the members that the government had adopted an apologetic stance, the Parliamentary Affairs Secretary said Pakistan is an independent and sovereign country and it has not adopted an apologetic attitude.

He said actually the US has expressed its concern over the growing incidents of violence, custodial deaths and extrajudicial killings. He said Pakistan has described the statement of the US State Department as interference in Pakistan's internal affairs. He said Pakistan does not subscribe to the views expressed by the US State Department. He said the spokesman of the State Department has admitted that the Prime Minister of Pakistan has ordered inquiry into the deaths.

Daily Criticizes PML-N for Comments on U.S.

BK1812040395 Karachi JASARAT in Urdu 15 Dec 95 p 3

[Editorial: "This Is How National Honor Is Ruined"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mushahid Hussain, the information secretary of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz group) [PML-N] has said in a press conference in Islamabad that the United States has twice expressed deep concern over the internal situation in Pakistan in the past six months and that this shows their mistrust of the Benazir Bhutto government. The statement by the PML-N secretary general might be true, but it also proves that his party not only considers U.S. interference in Pakistan's affairs as permissible but sees it as a touchstone for judging the government's efficiency or inefficiency. If this were not so, the PML-N information secretary would surely have made a point of condemning U.S. interference in Pakistan's internal affairs despite the PML-N's justified differences with the present government. But instead of doing this, he emphasized that the United States is also angry with the Benazir government. The Pakistani nation should realize that this is how a tussle for personal interests results is the ruining of national honor.

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Report of Possible Indian Nuclear Test Viewed

Official on Peace, Proliferation

BK1612155795 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Taking serious note of the reports that India is making preparations for a nuclear test, Pakistan has said that it will endanger the peace and stability in the region. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad today that India's nuclear test will seriously jolt the efforts for preventing the proliferation of nuclear arms in South Asia. The spokesman said the test will put a number of obstacles in effecting a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

Report Termed 'Speculation'

BK1712100595 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 16 Dec 95

[Commentary by Mohammad Yamin: "India's Nuclear Designs"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A leading United States daily, THE NEW YORK TIMES, has carried an alarming report that the U.S. spy satellites had recorded scientific and technical activity at India's Pokharan nuclear test site in recent weeks. The U.S. intelligence experts have expressed the view that the activity could be for exploding a nuclear bomb. The explosion could take place as early as within a couple of days. India has dismissed THE NEW YORK TIMES report as total speculation, but has failed to deny the substance. In fact, an Indian Government spokesman in New Delhi said the scientific and technical activity at Pokharan in Rajasthan was of routine nature. The White House, however, in a quick response to the development came out with the warning that new nuclear test by India could shake up the regional balance and dim the chances of a global Test Ban Treaty.

Deeply concerned over the news that New Delhi was set to explode a nuclear bomb, a White House spokesman disclosed that the Clinton administration was strongly committed to the goal of a comprehensive test ban and underscored the fact that nuclear testing by any state would jeopardize this goal. Meaning India specifically, the White House spokesman emphasized that given the present balance of power in South Asia, carrying out of such a test by India could be a very bad idea. Commenting on the development, (Garry Mulhalman), the director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control and leading civilian expert on the spread of nuclear weapons observed that the Indian action was going to have a snowballing effect. That means other countries in the region might follow suit. He also felt that Indian nuclear test would be a setback for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty now being visualized. A U.S. State Department official has expressed great concern over the report saying it will be a serious set back to nonproliferation efforts, if India went ahead with its explosion plans. The State Department official elaborated that the United States was committed to an early signing of a Comprehensive Test Ban and it was observing moratorium on nuclear testing. The United States has called upon all nations to demonstrate a similar restraint.

It [words indistinct] want to recall that Pakistan has repeatedly expressed its willingness to sign the NPT [nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty], if India also does the same. The point, however, is that India's nuclear ambitions are obviously at variance with the approach of the rest of the world toward controlling weapons of mass destruction. Leaving aside the thinking of the nuclear states toward the issue, who may have a vested interest in nonproliferation, the nonnuclear states also generally believe in nonproliferation. In this context, the decision by the ASEAN countries leaders at their recent meet may be cited. They have declared Southeast Asia a nuclear-free zone. It is a pity that the countries of the South Asian region have not been able to take a similar move only because of opposition by India. It is high time that the states of South Asia also got together and subscribed formally to the proposed Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This must, of course, be preceded by the creation of a conducive atmosphere for it by taking into consideration security concerns of the smaller states in the region and elimination of all sources of international disputes that threaten the peace and stability of the region such as the dispute between India and Pakistan over the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Daily on 'Snowball Effect'

BK1712124395 Islamabad THE NATION in English 17 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Indian Nuclear Test?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE NEW YORK TIMES [NYT] story about Indian preparations for conducting a nuclear test in Rajasthan, would come as a surprise to many, but it does not seem to have caused any surprise in the White House. The spy satellite's pictures of the Rajasthan desert, on which the NYT story is based, had presumably been seen and studied by U.S. experts, to make the White House spokesman's remark that "nuclear testing by any nation state jeopardises the environment in which that goal can be achieved and in the specific case of India, given the regional balance of power, such a test would be a very bad idea." The story,

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it will be noted, has not been discounted as implausible. In fact, the assessment in the United States is that India, having embarked on such a mission, is going to cause serious repercussions in Pakistan. The reference to "balance of power" clearly foresees the possibility of Pakistan reacting to the threat by developing its own nuclear capability. While some would remain sceptical about the story itself, citing the serious concern it would cause around the globe and would mention the international community's strong condemnation of the French nuclear test only recently, that, by itself may not be enough to make India desist from this mad course. But the other side of the coin is that the CIA confirmed during a congressional hearing in 1989 that India had resumed research on thermonuclear weapons. The data India already had from exploding its nuclear device in 1974, was not enough. It needed another experiment to collect more data. Also, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], the Indian Congress' main rival, having already declared that it would acquire a nuclear arsenal, making India an Asian superpower, the Indian Government is left with little choice but to adopt that course for its political survival. A nuclear explosion could thus help the ruling Congress party a great deal at the polls, which are scheduled after a couple of months. And finally, as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is expected to be signed in 1996, India could beat that deadline only by testing a device now. While all these factors go to support the NYT story, and Pakistan in its self-interest would be well advised to take note of them, there are some other factors too which could yet prevail to stop India from taking the plunge.

The seven ASEAN nations have just signed a nuclear ban treaty. India, by going ahead with its plans, would infuriate all of them. The reaction in the West may be harsher. The Indian action may even invite economic sanctions which could cripple Indian efforts to attract foreign investment. The fact that the Indian bomb could have a "snowball effect" in Asia, would exacerbate political tensions in the whole of South Asia, would seriously destabilise peace in the region, and would virtually rule out whatever chances there are for a permanent seat in the UN Secretary Council for India. India would probably have a hard time weighing domestic considerations against their fallout abroad, but the people in Pakistan hope that its decision would be guided by sanity and not by its dreams of a superpower status.

Bhutto Says Security Will Never Be Compromised

BK1712140295 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said we are vigilant and carefully watching the changing international and regional situation and the nation should be sure that the security, integrity, and solidarity of Pakistan will never be compromised irrespective of any circumstances whatsoever. The prime minister was talking to Members of the Provincial Assemblies [MPA's] from all over the country who called on her today. She said she did not believe in politics for the sake of grabbing power by undemocratic means or by deceiving the people and without any consideration of vital national interest. Politics, she said, is a noble mission for her and she means to realize her dream and desire of seeing Pakistan a developed nation. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto asked the MPA's to educate the people to distinguish between real politics and political blackmailing between facts and mere fabrication and between terrorism and patriotism. She said with the support of the people, we want to give a bright future to our coming generation. Minority MPA, Mehru Malchadwani, while presenting a check for Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Foundation said Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto is not only the name of an ex-prime minister, it symbolizes the great struggle of the people for restoration of democracy and against all despotic rule.

MPA's from all the provinces assured the prime minister that they will work more zealously for amelioration of the condition of the poor people of their constituencies under the guidance and dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Official Says Military Asked 'To Slash' Budgets

BK1412133395 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 14 Dec 95 p 1

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Karachi — Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Mansurul Haque said here Wednesday [13 December] that the government of Pakistan has asked all the three services — Army, Air Force and the Navy, to slash their budget.

Talking to newsmen after performing the inauguration ceremony of the 'Emergency Department' at PNS [Pakistan Naval Station] Shifa, the Admiral said this was causing a delay for getting frigates for Pakistan Navy.

He said the frigates were needed to replace the ageing vessels and frigates returned to the United States at the end of their lease.

Pakistan Navy preferred "Frigates" from the People's Republic of China as they were cheaper cost-wise and fully met the requirements of the Naval force, he added. Keeping in view the urgency, the Admiral said that Pakistan Navy even showed its willingness

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to share about 3.3 percent cost of the "Frigates" from its own funds. However, he said Pakistan Navy is just waiting for a "green signal" from the government of Pakistan. However, the Admiral hoped that the government of Pakistan will take a final decision in this behalf and accord necessary approval for the purchase of "Frigates". [passage omitted]

Budget Cuts Reports Denied

BK1412143795 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 14 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan Navy has vehemently denied press reports saying that the government has asked for reduction in Armed Forces' budget and termed them as incorrect.

A Navy spokesman clarifying the report said the factual position was that the government would set up a high-level committee to review individual needs of the Armed Forces. He said what [Navy Chief] Admiral Mansurul Haque said meant that the government had set up a high-level committee to review requirements of the three services in view of the resource constraints. The spokesman said the committee would finalize its findings by the end of the month and come to a conclusion about the requirements of each defense force.

Ministers Stress 'Top Priority' for Defense Budget

BK1812042095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 18 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Professor N.D. Khan, federal minister for law, justice and parliamentary affairs, has assured the National Assembly that the country's defense will be given top priority and that defense expenditure this year has been raised from 110 billion rupees to 115 billion rupees. He was speaking on a call-attention notice by Chaudhary Mohammad Jafar Iqbal, Haji Mohammad Buta and Mian Ejaz Ahmad Shafi last night. He said that defense constituted 26.71 percent of our budget. The house will meet again this afternoon.

Makhdum Shahabuddin, minister of state for finance said that the government will provide every possible help and support to infuse confidence in the stock market. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad yesterday, he said that the stock market, which was deregulated, is now being controlled by market forces. However, short-term and long-term measures had been initiated to overcome the slump in the market.

To a question, the minister said that the foreign exchange reserves were drained in the first four months due to payments on debt servicing. About defense budget, he said our first and foremost priority is security in view of the hostility around us. A major chunk of the budget is set aside for defense. Any cut in defense allocations is possible if India also does the same, he added.

Russia Denies Supplying Missiles to India

BK1812071095 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 18 Dec 95 p 1, 8

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 17 (APP) The Embassy of the Russian Federation in Pakistan has denied reports regarding supply of Russian long-range missiles to India. The Russian Embassy in a press release issued here Sunday [17 December] said "APP publications regarding the alleged plans to supply Russian long-range missiles to India is absolutely false."

"The Russian Federation is consistent in its policy aimed at nuclear and missile non-proliferation, particularly in South Asia, therefore any "reports" trying to prove the opposite are completely baseless "the release added".

"It may be mentioned that APP story was based on a news item circulated by Press Trust of India (PTI) which had quoted Russian popular Daily Pravda as reporting that "a secret Russian military report has recommended the supply of 45 Topol-M missiles to India.

"The Pravda quoted sources in Russian National Security Council as saying "the idea was discussed at a secret meeting of former Indian Army Chief General Sunderji and a Russian representative in April at a conference on International Strategic held at a US base in Virginia."

"According to the report 45 missiles will be handed over to India within a span of ten years." "The report also proposed to "develop Indo-Russian nuclear cooperation," as Russia feels "India is the only country in the world whose national interests do not contradict the strategic interests of Russia."

"India would no doubt become a nuclear power with its own strategic missiles" and so Russia could "extremely gain from this cooperation," Russian secret military report said.

Extradition of Egyptian Embassy Bomb Suspect Denied

BK1512133395 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A spokesman of Ministry of Interior has contradicted a foreign news agency report carried by a section of the press today that Pakistan has extradited an Egyptian with Canadian nationality suspected of involvement of in the recent Egypt Embassy bombing incident in Islamabad. He

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said this report is absolutely wrong, baseless, and malicious. Investigations into the incident are going on and there can be no question of any extradition till their completion. The spokesman pointed out, as even the Egyptian Government has denied this report, there can be no truth in this fabricated report.

Report on Problems With 'Super 7' Effort With China

BK1212011095 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 11 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Aroosa Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec. 10: Though the Pakistan Air Force [PAF] pins great hopes on the co-production of Super 7 (FC-I) in collaboration with People's Republic of China, there are sufficient indications to suggest that the project may be delayed for indefinite period, if not totally scrapped.

Both Pakistan and China are reported to be facing serious resource constraints to meet the initial research and development cost of the multi-billion dollar project.

Both sides were due to sign the formal state-to-state agreement for the joint production of Super 7 in December but due to financial difficulties, it is suspected that the signing might be delayed for quite some time. Under the general understanding between Beijing and Islamabad, the two sides have been exchanging technical teams to carry out the preliminary work on the project.

Under the broad agreement China is to build airframes and provide the Russian engines for the fourth generation fighter, Pakistan is tasked to arranged for avionics and weapon systems. According to defense analysts while the PAF might be able to meet its obligation of funding for the development of Super 7, China may like to change its priorities due to various other projects underway currently.

Despite years of double-digit defense budget increases, half of the Chinese air force's fighters and attack aircraft will be retired by 2005 because of old age, and China cannot afford to replace them due to serious financial problems.

According to a latest research, except for about four dozen SU-27 bought from Russia and whatever results from the new F-10 fighter program, the aircraft remaining in the China's military inventory are already obsolescent. Budget increases have largely been absorbed by the need to increase wages for the military personnel and inflation. But the source of concern for Pakistan is logically due to the fact that China is investing in the Russian-designed SU- 27 long range strike fighter and indigenous F-10 multi-role fighter programmes but paying little to as the Super 7 programme.

According to some US analysts the PLAAF [expansion unknown] has been unable to compete for foreign exchange with other military sectors, several of which have more clout such as Navy. Even the relatively conservative goals of replacing around 2,000 aging PLAFF fighters with a few hundred modern aircraft may not be possible. They predict that very likely can be done by the Chinese before 2010-15 to begin redressing their weaknesses.

The research also says that technical aid to China is coming from Iran and Pakistan. Iran gave China a number of Iraqi aircraft that were interned during Desert Storm It was due to the indepth analyses by Chinese which led to a decision to adapt an improved increased-thrust MiG-29 engine (RD-93) for the Chinese Super 79 newly designated FC-I. Russia's Mikayan and PAC [Pakistan Aeronautics Complex] will build components for the fighter.

China is also working with Iran and Pakistan to upgrade their aircraft, in particular PAF's F-7 fighter avionics.

The most pressing near-term question for Chinese industry is can it move forward meaningfully with the SU-27, F-10 and FC-I programmes. The research says in this case China would want to develop SU-27 as a long range strike fighter and the F-10 as a shorter range less expensive F-16 like multi-role fighter. However, the Chinese appear unable to afford more than one full-scale primary fighter development programme at a time.

Iranian Official Visits, Supports Afghan Government

BK1312132795 Islamabad THE NATION in English 13 Dec 95 pp 1, 11

[Article by Ishtiaq Ahmad]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister [DFM] 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi on Tuesday [12 December] termed the Afghan Government as legitimate, since it was represented at international organisations like the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Countries.

"Our reason and logic for considering the government of Borhanoddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Mas'ud is quite clear. If it was illegitimate, why would the UN and the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] give it recognition? We respect the international bodies," he said, while answering a question at a press conference held here at the Iranian Embassy. (Pakistan does not give legitimacy to the Kabul authorities.)

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Mr Borujerdi expressed satisfaction about his morning parleys with Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh, and hoped that the night session of talks between the two would help narrow down the two countries' difference of perception over Afghanistan.

The Iranian DFM said his visit to Pakistan was an extension of the periodical visits between the two countries aimed at improving bilateral relations and reaching a consensus on the Afghanistan issue.

Iran, he said, was worried about the current state of affairs in Afghanistan, and if that continued, it would not only be a big loss for the Afghan people, it would also endanger regional stability and international peace. The current situation in Afghanistan was causing problems to both Pakistan and Iran. In their discussions with Iran, the Central Asian states have also expressed their concern about the situation in Afghanistan. He said Iran did not have any plans for Afghanistan. Any plan prepared outside, or dictated on the Afghan nation, will not work. The territorial integrity of Afghanistan must be preserved. Iran believed in the principle of non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs, however, as a neighbour, it was quite natural for Iran to consult with the Afghan Government. "We find this our duty, as we did not leave them alone during the Jihad time, nor would we leave them alone in the post-victory phase."

He added: "Since we consider the Rabbani government as a legitimate government, that is why we are continously in contact with it. However we do believe that the government in Afghanistan must represent the wishes of all the Afghan people. All the Mojahedin groups should have due representation in the government."

Mr Borujerdi said that he had paid numerous visits to Kabul and met both Rabbani and Mas'ud. The two sides believe that the policy of negotiating with all the sides should continue. "Although we do find the task difficult but it is not impossible."

He said all those who had chosen war as a way of solving the Afghan problem were responsible for the current crisis in Afghanistan. Iran believed in a political solution to the problem. About Taleban, the Iranian deputy foreign minister hoped that they would perform a constructive role at this critical stage, and would not come up with mortars and rockets as they had done previously.

Asked whether the Taleban should have a role in the Afghan Government, he said it was a matter for the Afghan Government to decide; and the Afghan Government had considered some role for them in the future government set-up.

About Taleban allegations that Iran was trying to build an airbase in Bamyaul province, Ala'eddin Borujerdi said, "We have repeatedly denied this, and I deny this allegation again. I want to make this clear to Taleban that in Bamyan there are already two airbases so, why will Iran need another airbase?"

He said Taleban leaders did contact the Iranian officials at Iran's missions in Pakistan and Herat.

Talking against the Zahir Shah option in Afghanistan, the Iranian deputy foreign minister said: "We do not have any views on the internal matters of Afghanistan. But we have heard from all the Mojahedin groups that they fought the jihad to establish an Islamic state. Therefore, it will be quite natural on our part to respect them."

Article Views Joint Afghan Policy With Iran

BK1312140295 Islamabad THE NATION in English 13 Dec 95 pp 1, 11

[Article by Fahd Husain: "Pakistan, Iran Fail To Achieve Breakthrough"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — In a bid to iron out their differences Pakistan and Iran have decided to try and converge their positions on Afghanistan as much as possible, and say so publicly without having to retract their established stances.

This resolve to control the damage done to bilateral relations in the past few months, was the outcome of two working sessions held between the visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi and Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Shaikh at the Foreign Office on Tuesday [12 December].

It has been learnt that the two sides did not succeed in achieving any major breakthrough and as such the basic "difference of approach" as regards Afghanistan remains the same: Iran wants a more central role for Borhanoddin Rabbani in any future set-up while Pakistan does not look upon too kindly at this suggestion because of the open hostility between Islamabad and the Kabul regime.

"The two sides have decided to concert their positions in such a way so that commonality emerges", commented a senior official of the Foreign Office. They agreed that a broad-based government be formed acceptable to all Afghans. Borujerdi also briefed the Pakistani side on his recent meetings with various Afghan leaders. The fact that Iran has agreed that the 1997 OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] summit, scheduled to be held in Tehran, should now be held in Islamabad in line with Pakistan's 50th birthday, is being cited as proof of a new warmth between the two countries.

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But this warmth may not be deep as both might like it to be. Differences between Islamabad and Tehran had cropped over the Afghan scene as Iran was supportive of the Rabbani regime even as Islamabad was locked in a cold war with Kabul. Iran in addition has also complained of Pakistan's alleged support to the Taleban, an allegation repeatedly denied by Pakistan.

When this chasm was getting wider, Prime Minister Bhutto paid an official visit to Tehran where she held consultations with President Rafsanjani. However, it was said that Pakistan did not cut too much ice with Iran even after the prime minister's visit.

What the two countries have now decided to do is to at least minimize the perception of serious mutual differences and work towards some sort of a compromise whereby an interim set-up for Afghanistan can be finalized. That however may be easier said than done. The Iranian deputy foreign minister also called on Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Two Afghans Killed in Chaman Explosion

BK1712135695 Hong Kong AFP in English 1343 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Quetta, Pakistan, Dec 17 (AFP) — At least two Afghans were killed and 10 injured when a bomb exploded on a passenger van at Chaman in southwestern Pakistan's Baluchistan province, officials said Sunday [17 December].

The Afghans were travelling in the van from Chaman, a border town, to Spinbuldak on the other side inside Afghanistan.

All the injured, who included children and women, were hospitalised.

The officials, quoting injured passengers, said that the bomb was probably planted beneath the vehicle which was packed to capacity.

The Afghan Taleban militia, which is currently beseiging Kabul, has its headquarters at Kandahar in southern Afghanistan. Its local representatives blamed the explosion on the movement's Afghan opponents.

Five Killed in Karachi; Government Blames MQM

BK1612144195 Hong Kong AFP in English 1250 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, Dec 16 (AFP) — At least five people were killed in separate incidents in the port city of Karachi Saturday [16 December] while security forces detained an unspecified number of people in siege and search operations, police and residents said.

Two bullet-riddled bodies were recovered from a graveyard in the strife-torn city's central Liaquatabad area, while another was shot dead in nearby Usmanabad area, police said, without giving details.

In another incident unidentified gunmen entered a house, killing a guard and his relative in the same district, residents said.

Earlier three people including an activist of the city's opposition Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) were killed here Friday.

Police and paramilitary Rangers Saturday cordoned off a thickly populated western neighbourhood of Saeedabad, residents said. They said a large number of people were taken into custody for questioning.

Security officials, without giving any figure, said most of them were released after screening.

The operation was conducted to arrest militants and recover arms, they said.

The government blames the MQM for much of the violence in the city, where more than 1,750 people have died this year.

The party denies its involvement, saying the unrest stems from the government's policy of alleged discrimination against the Urdu- speaking Muhajir community which it represents.

Talks between between the government and the MQM, intiated in July, broke down in late September.

The MQM calling the siege and search operations "inhuman acts" has refused to resume the dialogue until such operations were stopped.

Sheikh Liaquat, a member of MQM's neogtiating team, left for Britain Saturday to meet party chief Altaf Hussain who resides in self-exile in London.

MQM sources said Liaquat would discuss the party's future policy including a recent government offer to resume talks.

Opposition Urged To Respond to Offer of Talks

BK1512153295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 15 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The federal minister, Nawab Yusuf Talpur, has called upon the opposition to come out with open mind for negotiations with the government on the issues which help to strengthen democracy and improving the lot of common man. He said in Islamabad today that the rejection of prime minister's offer of talks by the leader of the opposition, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, is deplorable as the invitation was extended to him in

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greater national interest. The minister said that the prime minister took the initiative once again for resolving differences between the government and the opposition in a political way. He said talks between the two sides should be held without any preconditions.

Talking to newsmen in Multan today, the minister of state for parliamentary affairs, Makhdum Shah Mahamud Qureshi, said the offer of talks to the opposition extended by the prime minister was in accordance with democratic norms and need of the hour. He said the opposition must respond in a positive manner to the offer which is meant to roll on [as heard] the system in establishing supremacy of institutions in the country.

Sri Lanka

Security Operations Intensified in Colombo

BK1712120095 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Security operations in and around Colombo have been intensified to prevent the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres from creating violence. The police said that cordon and search operations would be continued to ensure the safety of civilians. It also said as a result of constant vigilance they were able to prevent terrorists attacking Colombo in the recent past. Inspector General of Police, W.B. Rajaguru, has said that this does not mean that the LTTE has stopped subversion in Colombo. He appealed to the public to continue to be vigilant and alert in the future as well.

The LTTE is reportedly threatening an eminent Sri Lankan journalist domiciled in Canada. D.B.S. Jayaraj, editor of Canada's leading Tamil weekly, MANJARI, and an internationally reputed commentator on Tamil affairs has been under threat since April this year. The Tigers targeted Mr. Jayaraj because of his outspoken criticism of their decision to withdraw from peace talks with the government. Now, the Toronto Metropolitan Police have arrested a former native of Valvettiturai in the Jaffna peninsula for intimidating shop owners who are selling the MANJARI. The accused reportedly led a gang of Tamil youths to the shop and assaulted the salesmen. Mr. Jayaraj had been injured in an earlier assault apparently carried out for writing an article about the Kittu [former LTTE leader who committed suicide when caught by Indian security forces] incident. The terrorists has been putting pressure on him to write stories in their favor. The editor has now written to the World Tamil Movement which is leading the crusade against his paper. He asked the movement to state its position clearly. He also pledged to continue publishing his paper as long as Tamil leaders in Canada are willing to read it.

LTTE: Navy Shelling Tamil Leader's Birthplace

BK1612092095 Hong Kong AFP in English 0837 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, Dec 16 (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas Saturday [16 December] accused the Sri Lankan Navy of shelling the birthplace of their chief Velupillai Prabhakaran in the island's northern tip, destroying several houses and causing residents to flee.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said navy gunboats fired shells at Vadamarachchi in the northern peninsula of Jaffna on Thursday, destroying an unspecified number of houses.

The LTTE's London office said in a statement faxed here that the roof of a government hospital was damaged in the attack which forced scores of residents in the coastal belt to flee to the interior.

"A Hindu temple was also damaged considerably," the statement said. "Fishermen fishing on the high seas abandoned their boats together with (their) nets and fled for safety."

The military here declined to comment on the LTTE allegation.

Vadamarachchi is the birthplace of LTTE head Prabhakaran, Sri Lanka's most wanted man who has been leading a protracted campaign for a homeland known as Eelam across the island's northeast.

The drive has left more than 50,000 people dead and thousands injured.

Sri Lankan troops captured the former LTTE bastion of Jaffna town on December 2 after a 50-day military offensive which claimed the lives of more than 2,500 people on both sides.

Parts of the peninsula, including Vadamarachchi, are still held by the LTTE, which also controls large areas in northern Sri Lanka as well as the east coast.

Navy Destroys LTTE Boat in 'Sea Battle'

BK1612115795 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The brief lull in the fighting in the north following the retaking of Jaffna ended when a naval craft destroyed a Tiger fiber dinghy in a sea battle about 100 meters north of Kalmunai Point in Pooneryn on Thursday [14 December] night. The Tiger dinghy had been moving toward Jaffna when a naval craft on

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a reconnaissance mission engaged it with machine gun fire completely destroying it along with the occupants, a Defense Ministry release said. LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] transmission monitored by the Army confirmed the total destruction of the dinghy and its occupants. The Navy suffered no casualties in this sea battle.

The LTTE now in disarray has gone on a spree of seizing vehicles and extorting funds from Tamil civilians, according to official reports. The LTTE leaders are also making desperate appeals to Tamils to offer their children over 10 years to fight the Eelam war to the finish, according to travelers from the north reaching Colombo. The LTTE leadership has not given up their dream of an Eelam though the current outlook for the group seems to be the bleakest since their advent two decades ago, an analyst said. Reports from the north said that the LTTE leaders are holding back at gunpoint the refugees now in Thenmarachchi and Vadamarachchi divisions who are eager to get back to their homes in Jaffna town and other parts in the Walikamam Division.

Rebels Say 43 Killed, 76 Injured in Bombing

BK1712094895 Hong Kong AFP in English 0425 GMT 17 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, Dec 17 (AFP) — Forty-three Tamil civilians were killed in bombing and shelling during a Sri Lankan military drive against Tamil Tiger separatists in the northern district of Jaffna last month, the rebels said Sunday [17 December].

At least 76 others were seriously injured in the bombing by planes and artillery fire, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said in a statement faxed from London, quoting a government official in Jaffna.

It said the deaths occurred mainly in the regions of Vadamarachchi, the birthplace of Tiger supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran, and Thenmarachchi in Jaffna peninsula.

The former LTTE stronghold of Jaffna town fell to the army on December 2 after a bloody 47-day military offensive which left nearly 2,500 people dead on both sides. It was the biggest military drive in Sri Lanka since the conflict started.

Vadamarachchi and Thenmarachchi are still held by the LTTE, which also controls large areas in northern Sri Lanka as well as the country's east coast. There has been no major fighting in Jaffna since the fall of the town.

More than 50,000 people have died in the LTTE's protracted campaign for an independent homeland called Eelam across the island's northeast. Thousands more have been injured.

LTTE Attack on Power Line Causes Blackout

BK1812015295 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 18 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Several parts of Batticaloa district went under a blackout when the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] blasted four pylons at Kalavanchikudy causing extensive damage to Inginiyagala-Batticaloa high tension power line on Saturday night [16 December].

The LTTE strike at the Batticaloa district power supply came as the government finalised plans to launch a massive reconstruction and rehabilitation project in the war-scarred Jaffna. Housing and Construction Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva visited the peninsula last Saturday to ensure the groundwork was laid for restoring civil administration in Jaffna town and other parts retaken by the army.

The areas hit by the power failure are Batticaloa, Porativu, Kalavanchcikudi, Settipalam, Ariyampati, Pudikudirippu and Kathankudi.

Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) workmen were already busy repairing the damaged power line to restore the power supply, official sources said.

Meanwhile, the LTTE's 'pistol gang' stalking 'traitors' killed a 29 year old Tamil civilian in Kinniya on Friday night, our Trincomalee district correspondent reported.

Two unidentified persons had forcibly taken Weerasingham Kirubakaran out of his home and shot him dead, the correspondent said.

Kirubakaran was the 20th victim of the 'pistol gang' in Trincomalee district since the beginning of the Eelam War Three, security sources had told our correspondent.

Troops on patrol at Sittandy, 20 kms North West of Batticaloa, engaged a group of Tiger rebels on Saturday killing one of them. Troops recovered the Tiger's body with two hand grenades. Troops suffered no casualties in this encounter.

Militant Hindu Leader Gives Support to LTTE

BK1612121495 Hong Kong AFP in English 1151 GMT 16 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NAGPUR, Dec 16 (AFP) — A powerful Hindu national leader on Saturday [16 December] said he supported Sri Lanka's dominant Tamil

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separatist group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in its fight against the island government.

Bal Thackeray, chief of the Hindu Shiv Sena (Shivaji's army) party in the western state of Maharashtra, said he admired the grit of the LTTE guerrillas.

"I have supported the LTTE after putting a lot of thought to the issue," the Hindu fundamentalist leader said in Nagpur, 850 kilometres (510 miles) east of Bombay.

"The LTTE is a force and a spirit which is being killed unnecessarily. My idea is that they can be used for India's good if they can be given some responsibility such as countering the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence activities," he said.

Thackeray and other nationalist politicians accuse the Pakistani military intelligence arm of fomenting Muslim separatism campaigns in India. Islamabad denies the allegations.

Thackeray said he supported the LTTE because the Tamil guerrillas are Hindus. "I can call for a total shutdown across Maharashtra if the atrocities on them by the Sri Lankan Army increases," he warned.

The Shiva Sena is a partner in a coalition which administers Maharashtra, India's most industrialised state.

Thackeray said LTTE's war against the Sri Lanka Government was justified.

"There was nothing wrong with their demand. But it was not conceded and their struggle escalated in response to increasing atrocities against them," he said of the ethnic strife which has claimed 50,000 lives since 1972.

The Sri Lankan Government of Chandrika Kumaratunga launched the country's biggest military offensive in October against the LTTE in a bid to pry the Tigers out of their base in the northern Jaffna peninsula.

Minister Tours Jaffna, Assures Rehabilitation Funds

BK1812014895 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 18 Dec 95

[Report by Ariyaratne Ganegoda — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chairman of the Task Force on Northern Rehabilitation Nimal Siripala de Silva who toured Jaffna on Saturday [16 December] to identify priorities in the rehabilitation effort, said the government would readily supply funds necessary to rebuild Jaffna although it would cost more than the 39 million rupees (US$760,000) originally pledged at the inception of the peace talks.

Addressing a press conference at his Ministry soon after his return to Colombo, Nimal Siripla de Silva, who is also the housing minister, said in Jaffna he discussed rehabilitation and welfare measures with Major Generals Rohan Daluwatte and Pagoda and Jesudasan and Siriwardena. He also met displaced persons in Jaffna and inquired about their needs and difficulties.

He said steps would be taken soon to re-commission the Kankesanturai Cement Factory after completing urgent repairs.

The Tamil Tiger rebels had removed most of the factory's plant and machinery and cannibalised the remnants. Replacements would be ordered immediately so that the factory could re-start operations soon.

He said although the Kankesanturai Factory had stopped functioning they found 12,500 tons of clinker used for cement manufacture idling at the plant.

The minister said President Chandrika Kumaratunga who was very keen on rehabilitating Jaffna had given them all the necessary backing for the task.

Already technicians and machinery and equipment necessary for the reconstruction effort had been despatched to Jaffna to start work forthwith.

Fifteen generators had also been sent to provide electricity and it would take at least two months to commence the electricity supply.

Fielding questions by the press de Silva said the Civil Administration unit in Jaffna is now housed at Kankesanturai and another building for the unit would be put up in Jaffna city soon.

He said roads and the Jaffna hospital would be rehabilitated on a priority basis for the convenience of displaced persons returning to Jaffna.

He said a large number of displaced civilians have heeded the President's call and expressed willingness to return to their previous abodes but the rebels were preventing their return through coercion and false propaganda.

The minister said during the tour he observed almost 80 per cent of the buildings in Jaffna intact. They also visited the Nallur Kovil, Jaffna University premises, Mandativu road, Kittu memorial park and a former Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) military training centre located in an area which had a predominance of Muslims earlier.

The branch offices of the Commercial Bank and the People's Bank in Jaffna and shops remained closed.

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Asked whether Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) had helped the rehabilitation effort, he said none had so far lent support since Jaffna was liberated by the Riviresa [sunshine — name of government offensive] Forces.

However, the NGOs and the government were jointly handling the relief operations in the LTTE controlled areas in the North.

Food, medicines and other requirements are being sent to Killinochchi and Vavuniya and other areas too without interruption.

The Minister said Task Force Secretary S.M.J. Senaratne, and representatives of the Cement and State Engineering Corporations, Road Development Authority, Ceylon Electricity Board , Cooperative Wholesale Establishment, Buildings Department and other relevant institutions accompanied him on the tour.

UNP Chairman's Resignation Accepted

BK1312040395 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 12 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] UNP [United National Party] and Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe in a statement issued on Monday [11 December] said Mr. A.C.S.Hameed, the Chairman of the UNP had informed him that he wished to step down from the office of Party Chairman due to reasons of ill-health, which precluded him from giving his full time and attention to party activities at this critical time.

Mr. Wickremesinghe's statement said: "As Leader of the United National Party I have, with great regret, decided to accede to Mr. Hameed's request in view of the crucial reasons which urged him to take this decision.

"However, Mr. Hameed has assured me that his services will always be available to the party when required.

"At this juncture, both on behalf of the United National Party and myself, I must express our warm appreciation of the distinguished service rendered to the party by Mr. Hameed. We wish him a speedy recovery and a safe return to continue his life of service."

Minister Says Chinese Firm To Use Galle Harbor

BK1412040495 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 14 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Mr. Indika Gunawardana accepted the fact that he had reached an agreement to allow a fishery company registered under the Republic of China to utilize the facilities at the Galle fishery harbour.

He revealed this at a meeting with the Galle fishery community who were troubled at the immediate advent of some Chinese trawlers at the Galle fishery harbour.

"The Chinese fishermen will only be permitted to fish in the international sea and in the event of their being found fishing in the Sri Lankan sea, immediate action will be taken to send them back to their country."

"The agreement between the Chinese company and the Sri Lankan government has been signed in such a way to deal with any sort of malpractices in the process," the minister disclosed.

To convince the Galle fishery community, who seemed to be much scared of the arrival of Chinese fishermen, Mr. Gunawardana assured that no discrimination will be done to any Sri Lankan fisherman in the use of the facilities at Galle fishery harbour.

"Instead more facilities would be provided at the fishery harbour of Galle, including a new pier for fishing boats, with a cost of 96 lakhs under the aids of Asian Development Bank of which the constructional work is being carried out at an accelerated pace," the minister added.

The minister, Indika Gunawardana who criticized the policy of the previous government in respect of the fishery industry claimed that there was no one to protest against the biased sell-outs of the Galle fishery harbour to private firms by dividing it into several portions.

Mr. Gunawardana said that the Republic of China is still a socialist country under the red banner, and that as a Marxist, he has immense confidence on that government, that they would not exploit or misuse the facilities provided to them at the harbour.

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